

SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



Gregory of Nyssa: *Contra Eunomium I*

An English Translation with Supporting Studies



Edited by
MIGUEL BRUGAROLAS

BRILL

Gregory of Nyssa: *Contra Eunomium* I

Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

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BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0920-623X

ISBN 978-90-04-37708-0 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-37709-7 (e-book)

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Preface

In September of 1986 the University of Navarra (Pamplona, Spain) held the *VI International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*. Organized by Professor Lucas F. Mateo-Seco († 2014), the Colloquium brought together a number of scholars to delve into the *Contra Eunomium* I. The practice of devoting each colloquium to particular works of Gregory of Nyssa was already well established. After the two first colloquia which addressed general issues—*Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse* (Chevetogne, 1969) and *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie* (Münster, 1972)—, the following three focused on selected writings: *De infantibus praemature abreptis* (Leiden, 1974), *The Easter Sermons* (Cambridge, 1978) and *The Biographical Works* (Mainz, 1982). The Colloquium held in Pamplona was the first centered on one of Gregory's dogmatic works. It filled a bibliographical gap and, at the same time, brought about a significant advance in the study of Gregory's thought, precisely through its analysis of his most important polemical work. At this Colloquium the first generation of experts on Gregory of Nyssa set down a solid path upon which the upcoming generations would continue: in 2004, the *10th Colloquium* in Olomouc inquired into the *Contra Eunomium* II and, later in 2010, the *12th Colloquium* in Leuven discussed the *Contra Eunomium* III.

The proceedings from these three colloquia on the *Contra Eunomium* followed a similar structure: an English translation of Nyssa's text by Professor Stuart G. Hall was included along with numerous studies covering a wide arrange of topics from diverse perspectives. For this reason, in addition to what each individual volume contributes to the research in Gregory of Nyssa as a whole, the three volumes are of considerable scholarly significance, given that they provide an unabridged and unified translation of the entire *Contra Eunomium* accompanied by a selection of commentaries and studies. The significance of these proceedings is doubtless one of the main reasons for preparing a new edition of the *Contra Eunomium* I (Eunsa, 1988) now published by Brill as part of the Series "Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae," which also includes the *Contra Eunomium* II (VCS 82, Brill 2007) and III (VCS 124, Brill 2014).

This volume has a twofold intention: First, it attempts to render the essential parts of the original volume of *Contra Eunomium* I more accessible to international readers. To this end, it incorporates both the English translation of *Contra Eunomium* I and a selection of the articles published in the first edition that are still relevant today for the study of Gregory of Nyssa. In doing so, this edition gives an acknowledgement *in memoriam* of a renowned generation of Gregory of Nyssa scholars, such as Professors L.F. Mateo-Seco, G.C. Stead, P.M. Grego-

rios, B. Studer, E. Moutsoulas, and M. van Esbroeck, among others. Second, this volume strives to offer an up-to-date contribution to the research on the *Contra Eunomium*, showing both the continuity and the advances made in these studies. For this purpose, new articles by contemporary scholars—such as R. Winling, L. Karfíková, G. Maspero, and T. Tollefsen, among others—are integrated into this volume. We hope, consequently, that this book will both shed light on the developments that have been made in this field over the course of the last decades and offer an original contribution to reflection on Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*.

This book consists of three parts. The first introductory part contains three articles on the context of *Contra Eunomium* I. A new edition of B. Studer's well-documented historical analysis, published already in the previous volume, is followed by two new articles: the first by R. Winling concerns Aetius' influence on Eunomius and the second by A. Silvas deals with Gregory's Letters 29 and 30. In the second part there is a new version of the introduction to and translation of *Contra Eunomium* I by S.G. Hall, who painstakingly revised the text specifically for this volume. Lastly, the third part contains an original series of nineteen articles on *Contra Eunomium* I that cover a diverse array of philosophical and theological subjects; among them there are ten selected papers from the previous volume, seven new articles and two new versions of original texts revised by the authors. This series of contributions seeks to delve into *Contra Eunomium* I from a philological perspective, and with a particular eye for the history of theological and philosophical concepts. This approach would appear to be especially appropriate for the study of this dogmatic work of Gregory of Nyssa, which is in itself a milestone both in the history of Christian philosophy and theology and in the formation of Trinitarian and Christological terminology.

The late Professor Lucas F. Mateo-Seco encouraged this new edition of *Contra Eunomium* I and his help and guidance were pivotal during the preparatory stages of the project. We owe this volume to him and we express to him our sincerest gratitude. Along with Professor Mateo-Seco, we cannot proceed without acknowledging the impressive work of Professor Stuart G. Hall, who extends his already long list of translations with this complete and updated English version of Gregory's most extensive and challenging work. We would also like to thank all of the authors featured in this project, both the contributors to the former Proceedings and the authors who submitted new papers for this volume: F. Mann, B. Studer, C.S. Stead, E. Moutsoulas, H.R. Drobner, A. Meredith, T. Kobusch, J.L. Illanes, M. van Esbroeck, P.M. Gregorios, A.A. Mosshammer, M.F. Parmentier, R. Winling, T.T. Tollefsen, G. Maspero, A. Silvas, L. Karfíková, I. Vigorelli, C. Bozinis, and X. Batllo.

Finally, this volume was prepared as part of the research project under M.J. Soto-Bruna's direction: "Unity and Plurality of the Logos in the World: *Explicatio* and *Ratio Naturae* (4th–14th Centuries): Medieval Hermeneutics" (ref.: FFI2015-63947-P/PIUNA 2015-24). In addition, the publication of this volume would not have been possible without the help of J.L. Caballero, the editorial work of E. Reichert and K. Ang and the permissions generously granted by Ediciones Universidad de Navarra (Eunsa). We express our gratitude to them as well.

Miguel Brugarolas

Pamplona, 8 September 2017

List of Contributors

Xavier Batllo
Abbaye Saint-Pierre, Solesmes (France)

Constantine Bozinis
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

Miguel Brugarolas
Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (España)

Hubertus R. Drobner
Theologische Fakultät Paderborn (Deutschland)

Paulos Mar Gregorios (†1996)
Metropolitan of Delhi, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, New Delhi (India)

Stuart G. Hall
University of St Andrews (United Kingdom)

José Luis Illanes
Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (España)

Lenka Karfíková
Karls-Universität Prag / Palacký-Universität Olomouc (Tschechien)

Theo Kobusch
Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn (Deutschland)

Friedhelm Mann
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster (Deutschland)

Giulio Maspero
Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma (Italia)

Lucas F. Mateo-Seco (†2014)
Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (España)

Anthony Meredith
University of Oxford (United Kingdom)

Alden A. Mosshammer
University of California, San Diego (United States)

Elias D. Moutsoulas († 2014)
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece)

Martien F.G. Parmentier
Universität Bern (Schweiz)

Anna M. Silvas
University of New England (Australia)

G. Christopher Stead († 2008)
University of Cambridge (United Kingdom)

Basil Studer († 2008)
Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Roma (Italia)

Torstein T. Tollefsen
University of Oslo (Norway)

Michel Van Esbroeck († 2003)
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München (Deutschland)

Ilaria Vigorelli
Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma (Italia)

Raymond Winling
Université de Strasbourg (France)

PART 1

Introduction



Der geschichtliche Hintergrund des ersten Buches *Contra Eunomium* Gregors von Nyssa*

Basil Studer

„Welche Zeit oder welches Wort wird mich mehr über den Tod deines Bruders trösten als deine Gegenwart? Die Gemeinschaft mit dir hat der Verstorbene an Stelle von allem hinterlassen. In dir können wir ihn wie in einem hellen und schönen Spiegel noch immer sehen. In dir, kommt uns vor, besitzen wir ihn weiterhin“.¹ Mit diesen tröstlichen Worten beschloß Gregor von Nazianz den Brief, welchen er nach dem Tod des Basilius an Gregor von Nyssa sandte.² Für den Nazianzener lebte sein Freund Basilius in dessen Bruder weiter. Auf Gregor setzte er seine größten Hoffnungen. Wie weit haben sich diese weitgesteckten Erwartungen tatsächlich auch erfüllt? Ist Gregor von Nyssa wirklich zum treuen Erben seines Bruders geworden?³ Es wird nicht so abwegig sein, von dieser Frage auszugehen, wenn man sich über den geschichtlichen Hinter-

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see B. Studer, „Der Geschichtliche Hintergrund des Ersten Buches *Contra Eunomium* Gregors von Nyssa“, in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El „Contra Eunomium I“ en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 139–171. For further bibliography on this topic, see: B. Studer, „Der theologieggeschichtliche Hintergrund der Epinoiai-Lehre Gregors von Nyssa“, in: L. Karfíková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber, *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies*, Leiden 2007, 21–50; B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du «Contre Eunome» avec traduction des extraits d'Eunome*, Nammur 1994; V.H. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea. Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner*, Göttingen 1996; R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000; L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy. An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, Oxford 2006; M. Cassin, *L'écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse. Polémique littéraire et exégèse dans le Contre Eunome*, Paris 2012.

- 1 Für die genauen Angaben der in dieser Untersuchung verwendeten Texte und Studien vgl. A.M. Ritter, „Eunomius“, *TRE* 10 (1982) 525–528 und D. Balás, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *TRE* 14 (1985) 173–181. Dazu auch die bibliographische Einführung von M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 7–23.
- 2 Gregor von Nazianz, *Ep* 76,5 (Gallay I, 94).
- 3 Vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, *JÖB* 15 (1966) 105–132, bes. 112; R. Staats, „Gregor von Nyssa und das Bischofsamt“, *ZKG* 84 (1973) 149–173; H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 863–895, bes. 873.

grund des 1. Buches *Contra Eunomium* ein genaueres Bild machen will. Ohne Zweifel wäre es einseitig, sich auf eine solche Fragestellung zu beschränken; denn niemand zweifelt daran, daß Gregor sich nach dem Tod seines Bruders freier fühlte, spätestens von dieser Zeit an in vielem über ihn hinausging.⁴ Doch steht hier ein Werk in Frage, das nach allgemeiner Auffassung bald nach dem Hinscheiden des Bischofs von Cäsarea entstanden ist.⁵ Wenn man dessen Todestag vom 1. Januar in den Sommer verlegt, wird der schon geringe zeitliche Abstand zwischen ihm und der Abfassung der ersten zwei Bücher *Contra Eunomium* noch geringer⁶. Jedenfalls erfolgte dessen Redaktion nicht allzu lange vor dem Konzil von Konstantinopel (381), auf dem Gregor sie seinem Kollegen von Nazianz und Hieronymus vortrug⁷. Gregor muß in dieser fruchtbaren Schaffensperiode noch ganz im Bann seines Bruders gestanden haben⁸. Wie dem auch sei, eines ist sicher, diese Schrift stellt die Antwort dar, welche Basilius selbst auf die wohl 378 verfaßte zweite Apologie des Eunomius nicht mehr geben konnte⁹. Mindestens von daher gesehen, kann eine Untersuchung ihres geschichtlichen Hintergrundes die Frage nicht übergehen, wie weit Gregor von Nyssa den Fußspuren seines großen Bruders folgte. Diese Rücksicht soll darum, allerdings nicht zu einseitig genommen, auch für die folgenden Darlegungen wegweisend sein. Im übrigen handelt es sich keineswegs darum, besonders nicht vor diesem auserlesenen Kreis von Spezialisten, viel Neues zu sagen. Ihr eigentliches Ziel besteht allein darin, den geschichtlichen Rahmen

4 Vgl. G. May, „Einige Bemerkungen über das Verhältnis Gregors von Nyssa zu Basilius dem Großen“, in: J. Fontaine – Ch. Kannengiesser (eds.), *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, Paris 1972, 505–515; W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 301–313, bes. 311; A.M. Ritter, „Il secondo concilio ecumenico e la sua ricezione: stato della ricerca“, *Cristianesimo nella storia* 2 (1981) 341–365, bes. 357.

5 E. Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani*, OrChrA 202, Roma 1976, 69; T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, Patristic Monograph Series 8, Cambridge Mass. 1979, 503f.

6 P. Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysse, Vie de sainte Macrine*, SC 178, Paris 1971, 57–67 und ders. in der Diskussion zu G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse: Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 55–67, bes. 66f.

7 Vgl. W. Jaeger, *Contra Eunomium libri*, GNO 11, Leiden 1960, viii; mit Hieronymus, *De viris illustribus*, 128 und 133.

8 Vgl. G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 55.

9 CE I antwortet auf das erste Buch der *Apologie* des Eunomius, CE II auf das zweite Buch, während CE III zwischen 381–383 auf das dritte Buch der zweiten *Apologie* des Eunomius einging und die *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* dessen 383 in Konstantinopel vorgelegtes Glaubensbekenntnis widerlegte. Vgl. D. Balás, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *TRE* 14 (1985) 176, sowie T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 441–493: Datum und Inhalt der 2. *Apologie*.

von *Contra Eunomium* I in etwa abzustecken, um damit das Verständnis der verschiedenen in diesen Tagen gebotenen Beiträge von der Zeitgeschichte her zu erleichtern. Sollte es überdies noch gelingen, im bereits bekannten Bild den einen und anderen Punkt neu zu beleuchten, wäre die Absicht dieser gewiß allzu summarischen Darstellung mehr als erreicht.

I Der kirchengeschichtliche Hintergrund

Aus kirchengeschichtlicher Sicht läßt sich die Zeit, in welcher Gregor von Nyssa mit einem eigenen Werk in die eunomianische Kontroverse eingriff, als Zeit der allgemeinen Rezeption des nizänischen Glaubens im Römerreich umschreiben¹⁰. Die Berufung von Theodosius I. durch Gratian zur Herrschaft über die östliche Reichshälfte schuf Anfang 379 politische Verhältnisse, in welchen sich die vor allem von Athanasius und Hilarius begründete Orthodoxie fast überall durchsetzen konnte. Synoden, welche sich eindeutig hinter den Glauben von Nizäa stellten, waren nun ohne weiteres möglich. Die Neu- und Umbesetzung der Bischofssitze, die schon seit der nachgiebigeren Politik des Valens und der Aufhebung der Strafverfügungen durch Gratian 377/8 in Gang gekommen war, verlief seit dem Edikt des Theodosius vom 28. Februar 380 selbst im Osten mehr und mehr zugunsten der nizänischen Richtung¹¹. Die Berufung Gregors von Nazianz nach Konstantinopel ist dafür bezeichnend¹².

Die Bedeutung der Glaubensgemeinschaft, für welche sich Basilius zuvor zehn Jahre lang umsonst bemüht hatte und die nunmehr zustande kam, läßt sich vorerst einmal vom 1. Kanon des Konzils von Konstantinopel her erhellen, in dem aufgrund der *fides nicaena* die Häretiker aufgezählt werden, die aus

10 Vgl. im allg. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, Göttingen 1965; A.M. Ritter, „Il secondo concilio ecumenico e la sua recezione: stato della ricerca“, *Cristianesimo nella storia* 2 (1981) 341–365; M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, Roma 1975; sowie im bes. L. Abramowski, „Eunomius“, *RAC* 6 (1966) 936–947; G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, *JÖB* 15 (1966) 105–132; T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, Patristic Monograph Series 8, Cambridge Mass. 1979; W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 301–313; A.M. Ritter, „Eunomius“, *TRE* (1982) 525–528.

11 Vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, *JÖB* 15 (1966) 116, mit Theodoret, *HE* v 4,2–7, und A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 21–33.

12 Vgl. B. Wyss, „Gregor von Nazianz“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 793–863, bes. 795 f., und bes. T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 494 f.

ihr ausgeschlossen sind (DS 151)¹³. Die weitgehende Ähnlichkeit dieses Kanons mit den Anathematismen, welche die römische Synode 377/8 in Gegenwart von Petrus, des Bischofs von Alexandrien, ausgesprochen hatte (DS 154–159)¹⁴, beweist, daß die Art und Weise, wie die von Meletius von Antiochien und den Kappadoziern inspirierte Kirchenversammlung¹⁵ die von ihr vertretene Kirchengemeinschaft negativ abgrenzte, weit über diesen Kreis hinaus Geltung besaß¹⁶. Allerdings kommt im ersten konstantinopolitanischen Kanon so wenig wie im *Tomus Damiani* zum Ausdruck, daß die Ausschließung der von ihm aufgezählten Häresien keineswegs schon an den gleichen Punkt gelangt war. Gerade wenn man die Frage nach der verschiedenen Bewertung der in den genannten Dokumenten aufgezählten Häresien näher ins Auge faßt, kann man besser abschätzen, in welchem Maße Gregor von Nyssa seinem Bruder in der Kirchenpolitik gefolgt, welches also sein kirchlicher Standort war, als er sein *Contra Eunomium* verfaßte.

Die zuerst erwähnten Eunomianer oder Anhomöer bildeten die Gruppe, die man heute als die radikalen Arianer oder Neuarianer bezeichnet¹⁷. Sie gehen auf Aetius, den Lehrer des Eunomius, zurück, welcher seit ungefähr 355 die extremen Formeln des Arius wiederaufgenommen hatte¹⁸. Obgleich sie den Sohn nicht ausdrücklich als dem Vater unähnlich nannten, wie der ihnen zugelegte Name nahelegt, ordneten sie ihn dennoch dem Vater als erstes Geschöpf unter und betrachteten zudem den Heiligen Geist als höchstes der Geschöpfe des Sohnes¹⁹. Kirchenpolitisch konnten sie sich jedoch kaum entfalten. Seit 358

13 Vgl. zur Textkritik des 1. Kanons A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 121 f.

14 Zur Frage dieser Synode und der Datierung des *Tomus Damasi* vgl. Ch. Pietri, *Roma cristiana. Recherches sur l'Eglise de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Mil-tiade à Sixte III (311–440)*, vol. I, Rome 1976, 833–840, bes. 834; 868. Dazu Rufinus, *HE* II, 20.

15 Zur Zusammensetzung der Kirchenversammlung von Konstantinopel, vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 39 f.

16 Schon im Edikt vom 10. Jan. 381 wurden im besonderen die Photinianer, Arianer und Eunomianer verurteilt. Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 32; und T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 512 f.

17 Vgl. M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 253; A.M. Ritter, „Eunomius“, *TRE* 10 (1982) 525 f. Grundlegend für die Geschichte der „Neuarianer“ ist nun T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, Patristic Monograph Series 8, Cambridge 1979, auch wenn diese Darstellung bes. in den Datierungsfragen zum Teil eigene Wege geht.

18 Vgl. L. Abramowski, „Eunomius“, *RAC* 6 (1966) 936 ff.; und T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 61–132.

19 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 15 (SC 305, 285 ff.), sowie Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 220 (GNO I, 90). Dazu E. Cavalcanti, „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio

stießen sie auf den Widerstand der Homöusianer, der Leute um Basilius von Ancyra und Eustathius von Sebaste. Eunomius wurde wohl 360 für kurze Zeit Bischof von Zizykus²⁰. Doch 362 brachen er und seine Glaubensgenossen auch mit den von Konstantius bevorzugten Bischöfen um Eudoxius und Euzoius, den sog. Homöern, mit denen sie zuvor zusammengearbeitet hatten. Sie suchten nun eine eigene Kirchengemeinschaft zu organisieren, ohne sich jedoch durchsetzen zu können. 381 stand diese Kirche noch immer unter der Leitung des Eunomius. 383 wurde dieser auch vom Staat endgültig verurteilt. Basilius selbst hatte die Eunomianer von Anfang an bekämpft. Gegen sie schrieb er 363/4 seine drei Bücher *Contra Eunomium* und mußte auch später sich gegen sie wehren²¹. Gregor von Nyssa wird sie seinerseits zu den schlimmsten Häretikern zählen²² und gegen sie im Gefolge seines Bruders sein theologisches Hauptwerk verfassen.

Die zweite Gruppe, in der Verurteilung des Konzils als Arianer oder Eudoxianer bezeichnet, wurde von 358 an von Konstantius begünstigt und setzte sich mit ihrer auf der Synode von Seleucia (359) gebilligten Kompromißformel: „Der Sohn ist dem Vater gemäß der Schrift ähnlich“ kirchenpolitisch sowohl gegenüber den Homöusianern wie den radikalen Arianern durch. Von 364 bis 377 bildete sie unter Valens die vorherrschende kirchliche Gemeinschaft. Sie umfaßte Acacius, den Nachfolger des Eusebius von Cäsarea (+ ca. 365), Eudo-

di Costantinopoli del 381“, in: S. Felici (ed.), *Spirito Santo e catechesi patristica: convegno di studio e aggiornamento, Facoltà di lettere cristiane e classiche (Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis), Roma 6–7 marzo 1982*, Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 54, Roma 1983, 75–92.

20 Vgl. T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 361 ff.; A.M. Ritter, „Eunomius“, *TRE* 10 (1982) 525 (mit Quellenangaben).

21 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 304, und T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 364–390: Datierung (360/1) und Analyse des Werkes, sowie 431–434, mit dem Referat über die Briefe 232–236, in denen Basilius 376 Amphilochius im Kampf gegen die Neuarianer beisteht.

22 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Bas* (GNO X/1, 115); *Ephr* (PG 46, 825D). T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 493 f. bringt auch, aber ohne aus dem Text selbst ersichtlichen Grund, den *Sermo de Castigatione* (GNO X/2, 321–332) mit der Missionstätigkeit der Neuarianer in Kappadozien Anfang 380 in Verbindung. Wichtiger sind seine Hinweise (*History of Neo-Arianism*, 494–503) auf die Theologischen Reden (*Oratio* 27; 29; 30 [SC 250]), in denen Gregor von Nazianz in der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 380 die Neuarianer von Konstantinopel bekämpfte, in der Zeit also, in der Gregor von Nyssa daran war, sein *CE* abzufassen. Für eine retrospektive Beurteilung der Polemik gegen die Neuarianer um 380 sind auch die fünf Homilien des Johannes Chrysostomus, *De incomprehensibili dei natura* (CPG II 4318) aus dem Jahre 386 zu beachten. Dazu T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 529–539.

xius, als Nachfolger des Macedonius von 360 bis zu seinem Tod 370 Bischof von Konstantinopel, und Euzoius, seit 360, an Stelle von Meletius, bis zu seinem Tod, ca. 375, Bischof der arianischen Gemeinde von Antiochien. Seit dem Wechsel der Kirchenpolitik um 377/8 verloren die Eudoxianer immer mehr an Boden. Basilius selbst hatte sich schon sehr früh gegen sie gewandt, zusammen mit jenen Homöusianern, die zum nizänischen Glauben tendierten²³. Nach der Synode von Lampsakos (364) bemühten sich diese homöusianischen Bischöfe um die Unterstützung des westlichen Kaisers und des Bischofs Liberius von Rom, der von ihnen die Unterzeichnung des nizänischen Glaubensbekenntnisses verlangte (365/6). Basilius wird später gegenüber den Homöern in seiner Unionspolitik die gleiche Linie des nizänischen Glaubens und der Annäherung an den Westen verfolgen²⁴. Gregor von Nyssa hingegen, den Basilius 371 zum Bischof weihte, um ihn in seine kirchenpolitischen Bestrebungen einzuspannen²⁵, wird noch 375/6 Opfer der Angriffe der Homöer sein²⁶.

Als „Semiarianer“, einer wenig präzisen, auf Epiphanius zurückgehenden Bezeichnung²⁷ oder als Pneumatomachen wird eine dritte Gruppe betitelt, die aus einer Spaltung der Homöusianer hervorgegangen ist. Diese hatten sich seit der Synode von Ancyra (358) und vor allem seit der Synode von Seleucia (359) unter Basilius von Ancyra, Gregor von Laodizäa und Eleusis von Zizykus als eine geschlossene Kirchengemeinschaft hervorgetan. Als Erben des Eusebius von Cäsarea und Eusebius von Emesa vertraten sie die origenische Drei-Hypostasen-Lehre und wehrten sich damit gegen jede sabellianische Auslegung des Glaubens von Nizäa. Nach dem Tod des Konstantius nahmen sie den Kampf gegen die philoarianischen Homöer auf. Im Laufe der Jahre 363–367 spalteten sie sich jedoch in eine größere und kleinere Gruppe. Während die erste sich an den Westen und damit an das *Nicaenum*, einschließlich des Bekenntnisses zur Nicht-Geschöpflichkeit des Heiligen Geistes, anschloß²⁸,

23 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 303. Für die Beurteilung dieser frühen Stellungnahme des Basilius sind besonders *Ep* 9 und seine Briefe an Apollinaris wichtig. Dazu T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 362 ff.

24 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 304.

25 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 305. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 106; und G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 53, setzt das Datum der Bischofsweihe Gregors später an, aber vor Ostern 372.

26 Vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 110, 114 f.; G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 53 f.

27 Vgl. Epiphanius, *Haer* 73,1. Dazu M. Simonetti, „Semiariani“, *DizPatr* 111, 4844 f.

28 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 304.

kehrte die andere Gruppe 367 auf einer Synode im karischen Antiochien zur Glaubensformel von 341 zurück und verwarf die Gottheit des Geistes. Man gab ihr darum in der Folge den Namen „Pneumatomachen“. Unter der Führung des Eustathius von Sebaste und Eleusis von Zizykus konnte diese zweite Gruppe um 374 gewisse kirchenpolitische Erfolge verzeichnen²⁹. Ungefähr 376 bestätigte sie auf einer Synode das *homoiousion* und definierte den Heiligen Geist als Geschöpf³⁰. Nach dem Toleranzedikt Gratians schloß sich ein Teil von ihr auf der Synode im karischen Antiochien (378) als eine eigene Kirchengemeinschaft zusammen. Diese umfaßte vor allem Bischöfe aus den Provinzen Asia, Hellespontus, Lydia und von den Inseln³¹. Als Partei für sich kamen diese radikaleren Homöusianer unter Eleusis und Marcianus von Lampsakos auf Veranlassung des Kaisers Theodosius auch zum Konzil von Konstantinopel. In seiner Pfingstpredigt von 381 macht Gregor von Nazianz einen letzten Versuch, sie für die nizänische, nunmehr staatlich anerkannte Kirchengemeinschaft zu gewinnen³². Selbst das noch größere Entgegenkommen der Konzilsmehrheit, das sich in der eher vagen Neuformulierung des dritten Artikels des nizänischen Credo äußerte, fruchtete nichts. Die Gruppe um Eleusis war nicht bereit, ihre Zustimmung zu geben. Sie zog sich zurück³³. Darum wurde sie denn auch im ersten Kanon des Konzils mitverurteilt. Basilius selbst gehörte ursprünglich auch zur homöusianischen Kirchengemeinschaft. Er hatte jedoch schon 361/2 auf die nizänische Linie eingeschwenkt³⁴. Auf der Synode von Tyana (367) hatte er seinen Einfluß zugunsten einer Annäherung an die westliche und damit nizänische Kirchengemeinschaft geltend gemacht³⁵. 370 Bischof von Cäsarea geworden, setzte er sich ganz für den nizänischen Glauben im Sinn der *via media*, d. h. der gleichzeitigen Wahrung der göttlichen Einheit und der Verschiedenheit der drei Hypostasen, ein. In der Folge gelang es ihm auch, den größeren Teil der Homöusianer um Meletius mit den Nizänern zu vereinen. Hingegen konnte er jene Homöusianer nicht gewinnen, welche die

29 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Eustathius von Sebaste“, *TRE* 10 (1982) 547–550, bes. 548.

30 Basilius, *Ep* 244,9 (Courtonne III, 73–83).

31 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 39; E. Cavalcanti, „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio di Costantinopoli del 381“, 89–92.

32 Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 41 (SC 358, 312–354). Dazu E. Cavalcanti, „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio di Costantinopoli del 381“, 90 ff.

33 Vgl. Socrates, *HE* V 8 (SC 505, 166–170); Sozomenos, *HE* VII 7 (SC 516, 94–98).

34 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 9,3 (Courtonne I, 39–40).

35 Vgl. Basilius, *De Spiritu Sancto* (SC 17bis) und *Ep* 20 (Courtonne I, 50–51). Dazu W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 304.

Gottheit des Heiligen Geistes ablehnten. Schon im 3. Buch von *Contra Eunomium* hatte er sich im Grunde genommen von dieser Richtung distanziert³⁶. Zwischen 373/75 brach er endgültig mit seinem früheren monastischen Freund und Lehrer, Eustathius von Sebaste, der nunmehr an der Spitze dieser Pneumatomachen stand³⁷. Nach dem Tod seines Bruders mußte Gregor von Nyssa noch 380 in Sebaste den Widerstand dieser Kreise spüren³⁸.

Mit den „Sabellianern“ sind offenbar die Marcellianer anvisiert, welche nachher eigens genannt sind; denn diese werden immer als Sabellianer hingestellt³⁹. Auf jeden Fall gehen die Marcellianer auf Marcellus von Ancyra zurück⁴⁰, der seit Beginn der arianischen Kontroverse eine monarchianische Tendenz vertreten hatte. Er war deswegen von Eusebius von Cäsarea bekämpft worden. Die Kirchweihsynode von 341/2 hatte ihn feierlich verurteilt. Athanasius hingegen hielt bis etwa 346 zu ihm⁴¹. Die westlichen Bischöfe, die sich auf der Synode von Serdica auf seine Seite gestellt hatten, unterstützten ihn noch weiterhin. Erst 366 stimmte Liberius seiner Verurteilung durch die Homöusianer zu⁴². Seine Lehre wurde schließlich ohne Nennung seines Namens auf der Synode von Rom 377 anathematisiert (DS 160)⁴³. Basilius selbst erwartete, wie er 371 an Athanasius schrieb, von den westlichen Bischöfen eine klare Stellungnahme gegenüber Marcellus⁴⁴. Diese anti-marcellianische Politik wurde indes offenbar nicht von allen seinen Anhängern voll geteilt. Jedenfalls mußte

36 Vgl. Basilius, *CE* III (a. 363/6), bes. c. 6 (SC 305, 166–170), mit der klaren Darstellung der Nicht-Geschöpflichkeit.

37 Vgl. bes. Basilius, *De Spiritu Sancto* (SC 17bis), mit den *Ep* 129 (Courtonne II, 39–42). Dazu W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 306.

38 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Ep* 19 (GNO VIII/2, 62–68). Dazu G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 57 ff.

39 Vgl. etwa Basilius, *Ep* 207,1 (Courtonne II, 183–184).

40 Vgl. den Stand der Marcellus-Forschung bei A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band I: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, Freiburg 1979, 414–439.

41 Vgl. M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 199, mit Hilarius, *frag. hist.* 2,21.

42 Vgl. M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 366 f. Hilarius nahm offenbar unter dem Einfluß der Homöusianer in *De trinitate* schon vorher Abstand von den Marcellianern. Vgl. H.Ch. Brennecke, „Hilarius von Poitiers“, *TRE* 15 (1986) 318.

43 Im gleichen Dokument wird auch Sabellius verurteilt: DS 154, ohne daß jedoch eine Verbindung zwischen den Anathematismen 2 und 8 ersichtlich wäre.

44 Basilius, *Ep* 69,2 (Courtonne I, 148). Dazu R. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse: Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 199–229, bes. 202, mit Lit.

er diesbezüglich seinen eigenen Bruder Gregor⁴⁵ und 375 auch die Kleriker von Neucäsarea tadeln⁴⁶. 377 sah er sich weiterhin gedrängt, sowohl von den westlichen wie von den ägyptischen Bischöfen den Ausschluß der Marcellianer aus der Kirchengemeinschaft zu fordern⁴⁷. Immerhin drückte er in den betreffenden Schreiben die Hoffnung aus, diese möchten in die kirchliche Gemeinschaft zurückkehren⁴⁸. Basilius hatte sich übrigens selbst, gegen die Anklage zu wehren, er sei ein Sabellianer⁴⁹. Gregor von Nyssa seinerseits schloß sich nach dem Tod seines Bruders wieder enger an die marcellianischen Bischöfe an und wurde deswegen auf der Synode von Sebaste von 380 getadelt⁵⁰. Diese Umstände lassen erkennen, daß die Verurteilung der Sabellianer, d. h. der Marcellianer durch das Konzil von 381 nicht mit der gleichen Kraft erfolgte wie jene der arianischen Gruppierungen. Allerdings wurde ihre theologische Haupttendenz schon seit langem im Osten und schließlich auch im Westen bekämpft. Gerade die Einigung der Homöusianer und der Nizäner athanasianischer Prägung führte denn auch zu einer Neuinterpretation des nizänischen Glaubens, welche in der *via media* zwischen einer übertriebenen Unterscheidung der drei Hypostasen und einer einseitigen Betonung der einen Gottheit besteht⁵¹.

Gleich anschließend wurden die Photinianer verurteilt, welche auf Photinus, Schüler und Diakon des Marcellus von Ancyra und dann Bischof von Sirmium, zurückgingen⁵². Photinus war schon in den vierziger Jahren sowohl von den Orientalen als von den Lateinern wegen seines strengen Monarchianismus und seines Adoptianismus exkommuniziert worden. Seine Anhänger zerstreuten sich im Westen bis selbst nach Afrika hin. Aber sie stellten für die nizänische Orthodoxie keine ernste Gefahr dar. Basilius selbst hat sich in sei-

45 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 100 (Courtonne I, 218–219); und *Ep* 125,1 (Courtonne II, 30–32). Dazu G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 106–110, sowie R. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra“, 201–204.

46 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 207,1 (Courtonne II, 183–184). Dazu M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 427.

47 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 263; 265; 266 (Courtonne III, 121–126; 127–136).

48 Basilius, *Ep* 263,5; 266,1 (Courtonne III, 125–126; 133–134).

49 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 306.

50 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Epistula* 5. Dazu G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 113 ff.; G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 57 ff.; R. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra“, 204 f.

51 Zur Kritik der bisherigen Auffassung vom „Neu(Jung-)Nicänismus“ vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 178.

52 Vgl. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 439.

nen Briefen nie auf Photinus bezogen⁵³. Die Photinianer waren indes von der römischen Synode von 377 anathematisiert worden (DS 157). Vielleicht hatte diese Verurteilung über Meletius einen Einfluß auf jene von 381. Jedenfalls hatte schon Theodosius, der von Mailand und Thessalonich her auf dem laufenden sein konnte, in seinem Bericht vom 10. Januar 381 die Photinianer zusammen mit den Arianern und Eunomianern von der freien Religionsausübung ausgeschlossen⁵⁴.

Die Verurteilung der letzten Gruppe, der Apollinaristen, stellt wohl in diesem Zusammenhang am meisten Probleme⁵⁵. Apollinaris von Laodizäa, der dieser Bewegung den Namen gegeben hatte, war als entschiedener Verteidiger des Glaubens von Nizäa lange Zeit Freund des Athanasius gewesen⁵⁶. Nach dessen Tod betrachtete er sich sogar selbst als seinen Erben. Dank dieser Beziehungen konnten seine Anhänger Timotheus und Vitalis selbst bei Damasus Anklang finden. Zur gleichen Zeit wie Epiphanius im Osten⁵⁷ nahm der Bischof von Rom jedoch Stellung gegenüber gewissen Apollinaristen. Die römische Synode von 377/8 nahm Distanz sowohl von Timotheus als von Apollinaris (DS 159)⁵⁸. Im gleichen Sinn handelte die Synode von Antiochien von 379. Im Häretikerreskript des Theodosius wurden jedoch die Apollinaristen nicht angeführt. Die Verurteilung durch das Konzil von 381 ging ihrerseits nicht weit. Nicht umsonst mußten die Synodalen 382 sich gegenüber den westlichen Vorwürfen verteidigen, sie hätten zu wenig entschlossen gegenüber den Apollinaristen Stellung bezogen⁵⁹. Was Basilius angeht, stand er 361–364 in freundschaftlichem Verkehr mit Apollinaris⁶⁰. Es ist nicht auszuschließen, daß er von der Pneumatologie beeinflusst wurde, die dieser damals ausarbeitete. Stand er doch 373/5 zwischen den pneumatologischen Auffassungen der radikalen Homöusianer und denjenigen des Apollinaris. Er wurde darum von beiden Seiten

53 Vgl. den Index der Ausgabe von Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile. Lettres*, Tome III, Paris 1966, 236.

54 vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 32.

55 Vgl. zur Frage vor allem E. Mühlenberg, „Apollinaris von Laodizäa“, *TRE* 3 (1978) 362–371 (Lit.), bes. 363 f., sowie auch E. Cavalcanti, „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio di Costantinopoli del 381“, 75–92.

56 Apollinaris erhielt 362 von Athanasius den Brief an Epiktet.

57 Vgl. Epiphanius, *Haer* 77. Dazu A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 502–505: „Die Aktion des Epiphanius von Cypern und des Papstes Damasus“.

58 Vgl. dazu außer Ch. Pietri, *Roma christiana*, vol. I, 833–844.

59 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, *Apollinaris von Laodizäa*, Göttingen 1969, 382.

60 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 361–364 (Courtonne III, 220–226), die als echt anzusehen sind. Dazu E. Mühlenberg, *Apollinaris von Laodizäa*, Göttingen 1969, 38–44.

verdächtigt, der Gegenseite zuzuneigen⁶¹. In einer ganzen Reihe von Briefen verteidigte er sich vor allem gegenüber der Anklage, er hätte mit Apollinaris Beziehungen unterhalten⁶². 377 nahm er jedoch klar Abstand von den Apollinaristen. So in einem Brief an den Westen⁶³ und in einem Brief an die Bischöfe von Ägypten⁶⁴. Doch bei aller kirchenpolitischen Distanznahme von Apollinaris ging er auf dessen Lehre nicht näher ein⁶⁵. Er verteidigte sich bloß gegenüber der Anklage, mit ihm in Glaubensgemeinschaft gelebt zu haben. Ähnlich verhielt sich auch Gregor von Nazianz⁶⁶. Er wird erst 382 in die christologische Diskussion eingreifen⁶⁷. So kann es nicht verwundern, daß Gregor von Nyssa zur Zeit des Konzils von Konstantinopel noch nicht weiter auf dem laufenden war. Jedenfalls berichtet er selbst, er habe bei seinem Besuch in Jerusalem, also 382, mit Erstaunen von der apollinaristischen Lehre Kenntnis genommen⁶⁸. Er wird denn auch frühestens 385 Theophilus von Alexandrien bitten, seine Autorität gegen Apollinaris geltend zu machen⁶⁹ und erst 387 in seinem *Antirrheticus* Stellung beziehen⁷⁰.

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- 61 Vgl. E. Cavalcanti, „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio di Costantinopoli del 381“, 88f. Basilius, *Ep* 129; 131 (Courtonne II, 39–42; 44–46); *Ep* 223f.; 226; 244 (Courtonne III, 8–21; 23–29; 73–83).
- 62 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 269,4 [sic.] (Courtonne III, 139–141).
- 63 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 265,2 (Courtonne III, 128–131).
- 64 Vgl. Basilius, *Ep* 258,2 (Courtonne III, 101–102) (an Epiphanius). Dazu A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 535f.
- 65 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 22,13 (SC 270, 246–250). Dazu A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 537.
- 66 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Ep* 101 und 102 (SC 208). Dazu A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 538f. mit der Literatur zur Datierung.
- 67 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Ep* 2,11f.; 3 (GNO VIII/2, 16–17; 19–27). Dazu A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 121.
- 68 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Ad Theophilum adversus Apollinaristas* (GNO III/1, 117–128; CPG II, 3143). Dazu G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 61; E. Mühlenberg, „Apollinaris von Laodizäa“, *TRE* 3 (1978) 364f.
- 69 Vgl. G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 61. Dazu auch *Ephr* (PG 46, 825C).
- 70 Zur Teilnahme Gregors von Nyssa an dieser Synode vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 112. Die Synode selbst war nicht ohne Bedeutung für die Entwicklung der neuarianischen Bewegung, wie T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 509ff. gezeigt hat.

Mit diesen Hinweisen ist indes die Kirchengemeinschaft, welche Meletius im Gefolge von Basilius und mit ihm zusammen Gregor von Nyssa im Juni 381 unterhielten, erst negativ und nicht ohne beachtliche Abstufungen umschrieben. Am „Konzil der 150 Bischöfe“ nahmen nämlich neben den etwa hundert Bischöfen meletianischer Richtung, die zum größeren Teil schon auf der Synode von Antiochien von 379 anwesend gewesen waren, auch andere Bischöfe aus den Diözesen Asia und Pontus und anderswo teil⁷¹. Im besonderen waren auch 36 homöusianische Bischöfe unter der Leitung von Eleusius und Marcianus offenbar auf kaiserliche Einladung hin gekommen⁷². Sie hätten sich allerdings schon vor Beginn der eigentlichen Sitzungen zurückgezogen. Vor allem fanden sich später, nach der Beilegung der Maximus-Affäre⁷³, auch ägyptische Bischöfe unter der Leitung von Timotheus, des Bruders und Nachfolgers von Petrus von Alexandrien, ein⁷⁴. Schließlich war nach dem Zeugnis des Ambrosius von Mailand bei den Abschlußverhandlungen des Konzils wenigstens ein Vertreter des Westens, Acholius von Thessalonich, auch anwesend⁷⁵. Mit den führenden Bischöfen des Westens, Ambrosius und Damasus, stand man zwar nicht in bestem Einvernehmen, vor allem weil sie den von Lucifer von Cagliari geweihten Paulinus (362–388) unterstützten. Doch wie an der Synode von Antiochien (379) und am Konzil von 381 und dessen Nachwirkungen zum Ausdruck kam, war man sich in den Glaubensfragen im wesentlichen einig⁷⁶. Am meisten Verständnis zeigte Gregor von Nazianz, nach Meletius eine Zeit lang Vorsitzender des Konzils. Er verteidigte nicht nur einen Pluralismus in der Formulierung des Trinitätsglaubens⁷⁷, sondern setzte sich auch, allerdings zu seinem Nachteil, für Paulinus als den alleinigen Bischof von Antiochien ein⁷⁸. Auf jeden Fall stand das Konzil von Konstantinopel und die Synode des fol-

71 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 39f.

72 Vgl. E. Cavalcanti, „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio di Costantinopoli del 381“, 90ff.

73 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 49–53.

74 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 97–102.

75 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 97, mit Hinweis auf Ambrosius, *Ep* 13,7.

76 Vgl. O. Pasquato, „Antiochia“, *DizPatr* I, 228–233, bes. 230f.

77 Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 39 (SC 358, 150–196) (a. 381); *Oratio* 42,16 (SC 384, 82–84).

78 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 97–111. Dazu auch A. de Halleux, „Le 11^e concile oecuménique“, *Cristianesimo nella storia* 3 (1982) 325, wonach Gregor von Nazianz die anti-westliche Stimmung des Konzils bezeugte. Weil der Autor jedoch an einem theologischen Pluralismus interessiert ist, hat er die Tendenz, die Übereinstimmungen zwischen West und Ost abzuschwächen.

genden Jahres den westlichen Kirchen näher, als Basilius es je gewesen war. Dieser hatte sich seit 371 vergeblich bemüht, den Westen für seine Kirchenpolitik zu gewinnen. Seine Bemühungen waren besonders an den Ansprüchen von Damasus, des Bischofs von Rom, gescheitert⁷⁹. Den Umschwung zu dieser größeren Annäherung hatte die sicher nicht ohne Einwilligung des Theodosius einberufene Synode von Antiochien 379 gebracht⁸⁰. Dazu hatte der Kaiser selbst die Orthodoxie von Damasus und von Petrus von Alexandrien 380 zur Grundlage seiner Kirchenpolitik gemacht⁸¹. Selbst wenn sich im folgenden sein Verhältnis zum römischen Bischof merklich abkühlte⁸², muß seine damalige Stellungnahme zur Beurteilung der nunmehr erfolgreichen Kirchenpolitik des Meletius und der anderen Freunde des Basilius in Rechnung gezogen werden⁸³. Wie weit hingegen Gregor von Nyssa für eine pro-westliche Politik bereit war, muß offen bleiben⁸⁴.

Aus all dem Gesagten läßt sich ersehen, in welchem kirchenpolitischen Zusammenhang Gregor von Nyssa stand, als er im Herbst 380 seine ersten beiden Bücher *Contra Eunomium* verfaßte, die er im darauffolgenden Jahr in Konstantinopel Gregor von Nazianz und Hieronymus vorlesen sollte. Seit er von 379 an aktiver in die Kirchenpolitik eingriff⁸⁵, gehörte er zu den näheren Freunden des Meletius. Obgleich er offenbar nicht in allem mit ihm einig war, betrachtete er ihn dennoch als den eigentlichen Vorkämpfer der Orthodoxie, wie er selbst in seiner Leichenrede auf ihn bezeugte⁸⁶. Die Kirchengemein-

79 Vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 105 f., und bes. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 305 f., mit den Hinweisen auf die *Ep.* 66; 70; 92 (Courtonne I, 156–159; 164–166; 198–203); *Ep.* 138; 158; 120 [sic.]; 197 (Courtonne II, 54–57; 85; 25–26; 149–152).

80 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 31 f. Nach G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 112 f., erfolgte die Annäherung an den Westen in Rücksicht auf den Kaiser. A. de Halleux, „Le 11^e concile oecuménique“, *Cristianesimo nella storia* 3 (1982) 315 ff., äußert gegenüber einer Rezeption des *Tomus Damasi* durch die antiochenische Synode seine Bedenken.

81 Edikt *Cunctos populos* vom 28. Febr. 380 = *CodTheod* 16,1,2.

82 Vgl. Ch. Pietri, *Roma christiana*, vol. I, 853–860.

83 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 28–33.

84 Vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 113.

85 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Macr* (GNO VIII/1, 386,22 ff.). Dazu H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 867 f., und G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, III.

86 Gregor von Nyssa, *Melet* (GNO IX/1, 445,9–13). Dazu A.M. Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol*, 56.

schaft des Meletius war darum auch die seine. Er wurde dann auch in der Folge bei der kaiserlichen Bestätigung des meletianischen Konzils zum „Normalbischof“ ernannt⁸⁷.

II Der theologiegeschichtliche Hintergrund

Um die Kirchengemeinschaft, in der Gregor von Nyssa um 380 lebte, in ihrem ganzen Umfang zu werten, genügt es natürlich nicht, die kirchenpolitischen Zusammenhänge abzustecken und den gemeinsam bekannten Glauben zu umschreiben. Man ist zwar ohne Zweifel versucht, hinter jenen langwierigen Auseinandersetzungen und oft peinlichen Verketzerungen mehr regionale Interessen und persönliche Rivalitäten zu vermuten. Trotz allen bedauerlichen Menschlichkeiten muß man jedoch hinter der dem kirchlichen Frieden zugrundeliegenden Orthodoxie sicher theologische Überzeugungen und religiöse Ideale annehmen. Darum muß man hier auch den ganzen theologie- und frömmigkeitsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund mitberücksichtigen. Wie wichtig das ist, erhellt allein schon die Auffassung, die man damals von einem Bischof hatte. Wie Gregor von Nazianz, Johannes Chrysostomus und andere bezeugen, betrachtete man in jener Zeit den Bischof vor allem als Lehrer: als Verkünder des wahren Glaubens und Meister des geistlichen Lebens⁸⁸.

Zum Verständnis des theologiegeschichtlichen Hintergrundes der Orthodoxie um 380 und damit auch des theologischen Denkens Gregors von Nyssa könnte man nun sich damit begnügen, dessen patristische Quellen näher ins Auge zu fassen. Man müßte dabei sicher zuerst sein Verhältnis zu Basilius und Gregor von Nazianz abklären⁸⁹. Gleichzeitig müßte man der Frage nachgehen, was er mittelbar durch diese zwei Autoren oder auch direkt aus Origenes und Athanasius oder auch aus anderen Theologen, wie Marcellus von Ancyra und

87 Zur Rolle Gregors auf dem Konzil von Konstantinopel und zu seiner späteren Kirchenpolitik, vgl. G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa und die Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit“, 116–132, bes. 120 f., wo von der Einreihung Gregors unter die „Normalbischofe“ durch das Gesetz vom 30. Juli 381 (*CodTheod* XVI 1,3 [SC 497, 116]) die Rede ist. Als Vertreter der nunmehr allein anerkannten nizänischen Orthodoxie widerlegte er auch in der *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* dessen Glaubensbekenntnis von 383. Dazu T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 516–527.

88 Vgl. R. Staats, „Gregor von Nyssa und das Bischofsamt“, *ZKG* 84 (1973) 149–173.

89 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen 1966, 114 f.; Id., „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern *Contra Eunomium*“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1971, 230–244, bes. 241 f.

Didymus, geschöpft hat⁹⁰. Doch würde man sich dabei leicht in Einzelheiten verlieren. Es scheint darum besser zu versuchen, die Hauptlinien der griechischen Theologie zwischen 360 und 380 herauszustellen⁹¹.

Ohne Zweifel ging Basilius in der Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomius von Anfang an vom nizänischen Dogma des *gezeugt – nicht geschaffen* aus⁹². Weil er mit den Vätern von Nizäa Christus auf die Seite des Schöpfers stellte, konnte er die *agennesia*, wie sie Eunomius vertrat, nicht annehmen⁹³. In diesem Punkt stimmt Gregor von Nyssa mit seinem Bruder völlig überein⁹⁴. Im Grunde genommen war selbst für Eunomius das Verhältnis von Gott und Schöpfung entscheidend. Nur stellte er Christus in der Linie des Arius näher zu den Geschöpfen⁹⁵. Da er zudem die grundsätzliche Frage der *agennesia* aus dem Zusammenhang der Erkenntnis Gottes und der göttlichen Namen anging⁹⁶, kam Basilius nicht darum herum, diese gnoseologischen Probleme zu vertiefen. Er tat es vor allem im Anschluß an die origenische Lehre von den *epinoiai*⁹⁷. Gregor von Nazianz und natürlich auch Gregor von Nyssa folgten ihm darin⁹⁸. Wie

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- 90 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 242 f. (Origenes); R. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra“, 199–229; sowie auch B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome* I, Paris 1982, SC 299, 65–74 (Origenes und Athanasius).
- 91 Vgl. zu den folgenden Darlegungen vor allem M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*; W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 301–313; B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 127–200.
- 92 Nach W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 304, bietet Basilius in *CE* die erste Darstellung der neunizänischen Position, betont dabei jedoch den Wortlaut des *N* nicht. Vgl. dazu auch E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 236, und B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome* I, Paris 1982, SC 299, 244, nt. 1. Dazu den eindrücklichen Text in *Homilia de fide* 2 (PG 31, 466C–467C).
- 93 Vgl. bes. Basilius, *CE* II 17; 20; 22 ff. (SC 305, 64–70; 80–84; 88–98), wo gezeigt wird, in welchem Sinn in Gott von Zeugung gesprochen werden kann.
- 94 Vgl. etwa Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 220 (GNO I, 90 f.). Dazu A. Schindler, *Die Begründung der Trinitätslehre in der eunomianischen Kontroverse*, Diss. Zürich 1964, 156–162, mit Gregor von Nyssa, *Or cat* 39 (GNO III/4, 98–101), und *CE* I 270 ff. (GNO I, 105 f.).
- 95 Vgl. auch *An et res* (GNO III/3, 91–94), wo Gregor seinen Schöpfungsbegriff entwickelt.
- 96 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 233 f., und bes. T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 69 ff., mit dem Hinweis auf die Exegese von *Kol* 1,15 f. in Eunomius, *Apologia* 24 (SC 305, 282 ff.; 197; 222 f.), mit Athanasius, *Synod* 48; 482 und 489 f., zu *Apologia* 11.
- 97 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apologia* 12 und 20 (SC 305, 257 ff. und 277 ff.). Dazu L. Abramowski, „Eunomius“, *RAC* 6 (1966) 942 und 946.
- 98 Vgl. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome* I, Paris 1982, SC 299, 72 ff. Vgl. Gregor

sehr es Basilius auf die nizänische Grundaussage des *gezeugt – nicht geschaffen* ankam, findet die Bestätigung darin, daß er in seiner Pneumatologie vorerst mehr negativ die Geschöpflichkeit des Heiligen Geistes eindeutig ablehnte und erst nach und nach dazu übergang, positiv herauszustellen, was damit im Lichte der Schrift gemeint ist⁹⁹. Mit der Anwendung der nizänischen These von der Nicht-Geschöpflichkeit des Sohnes auf den Heiligen Geist war allerdings auch die Frage aufgeworfen, wie weit sich der Ursprung des Sohnes von demjenigen des Geistes unterscheide. Basilius wich dieser Frage aus¹⁰⁰. Gregor von Nazianz antwortete darauf mit einer bloß formalen Lösung, indem er zwischen Zeugung und Hervorgang unterschied¹⁰¹. Gregor von Nyssa seinerseits wird sich nicht scheuen, von *durch den Sohn* zu sprechen, freilich ohne deswegen den Geist als Geschöpf des Sohnes hinzustellen¹⁰². Im besonderen war indes in

von Nazianz, *Oratio* 28f. (SC 250), und Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 156–160 (GNO I, 73 ff.). Dazu E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen 1966, 183–196: zur Lehre von den Namen Gottes.

- 99 Vgl. den schönen Text bei Basilius, *Hom. de fide* 3 (PG 31, 468C–472B). Dazu G. Kretschmar, „Die Theologie der Kappadokier und die asketischen Bewegungen in Kleinasien im 4. Jahrhundert“, in: P. von Hauptmann (hrsg.), *Unser ganzes Leben Christus unserm Gott überantworten. Studien zur ostkirchlichen Spiritualität*, Göttingen 1982, 102–133, bes. 124. Vgl. weiter Basilius, *CE* III 5 (SC 305, 162–164) und Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 304–313 (GNO I, 116–119). Dazu E. Cavalcanti, „Interpretazione di Luca 1,35 nel dibattito sullo Spirito Santo prima del concilio“, in: J. Saraiva Martins (ed.), *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum. Atti del Congresso Teologico Internazionale di Pneumatologia in occasione del 1600° anniversario del I. Concilio di Costantinopoli e del 1550° anniversario del Concilio di Efeso*, vol. 1, Città del Vaticano 1983, 83–99, bes. 94; Id., „Lineamenti del dibattito sullo Spirito Santo, da s. Basilio al concilio di Costantinopoli del 381“, in: S. Felici (ed.), *Spirito Santo e catechesi patristica: convegno di studio e aggiornamento, Facoltà di lettere cristiane e classiche (Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis)*, Roma 6–7 marzo 1982, Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 54, Roma 1983, 75–92; sowie B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 183–187.
- 100 Vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 186 f., mit Basilius, *De Spiritu Sancto* XVIII 46 (SC 17bis, 408–410); *HomPs* 32,4 (PG 29, 332C–333D).
- 101 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 23,11 (SC 270, 302–304); *Oratio* 25,16 (SC 284, 194–198); *Oratio* 29,2 (SC 250, 178–180); *Oratio* 31,7 f. (SC 250, 286–290); *Oratio* 39,12 (SC 358, 172–176).
- 102 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 280 und 378 (GNO I, 108 f. und 138); *Abl* (GNO III/1, 56,5–10). R. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra“, 200–210; B. Schultze, „Die Pneumatologie des Symbols von Konstantinopel als abschließende Formulierung der griechischen Theologie“, *OCF* 47 (1981) 5–54, bes. 45–52, und L.F. Mateo-Seco, „La procesión del Espíritu Santo en la *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*“, in: J. Saraiva Martins (ed.), *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum. Atti del Congresso Teologico Internazionale di Pneumatologia in occasione del 1600° anniversario del I. Concilio di Costantinopoli e del 1550° anniversario del Concilio di Efeso*, vol. 1, Città del Vaticano 1983, 181–185.

der nizänischen Grundlehre der Nicht-Geschöpflichkeit des Sohnes und damit auch des Heiligen Geistes die Schwierigkeit eingeschlossen, die Einheit der drei Ungeschaffenen aufrecht zu erhalten¹⁰³. Wie weit diese dornenvolle Problematik schon auf dem Konzil von Nizäa selbst diskutiert wurde, ist schwer auszumachen. Sicher setzte die Kontroverse darüber gleich nach dem Konzil ein und kam nicht mehr zur Ruhe. Schon Athanasius hatte die Lösung der Frage vor allem in der gegenseitigen Durchdringung der göttlichen Personen gesucht¹⁰⁴. Die Kappadozier wurden im besonderen durch die scharfsinnigen Einwände des Eunomius gezwungen, diese Aporie des christlichen Glaubens so gut wie möglich zu überwinden¹⁰⁵. Basilius sah die Lösung darin, den Vater allein als *arche* zu betrachten und diese mit der Gottheit zu identifizieren¹⁰⁶. Er und die anderen Kappadozier unterstrichen zudem das einzige Heilswirken von Vater, Sohn und Geist: es war ihnen nur ein Wollen und eine einzige *energeia* zuzusprechen¹⁰⁷. Daß man die Einheit der Drei nicht auf Kosten einer Vermischung vertreten durfte, war für Basilius von vornherein klar. Gerade weil er von Anfang an das nizänische Dogma von der Nicht-Geschöpflichkeit des Sohnes und des Geistes im Lichte der origenischen Tradition der drei Hypostasen anging, damit radikaler als Athanasius sich von Marcellus von Ancyra absetzte, fand er sich den schier unlösbaren Schwierigkeiten mit der göttlichen Einheit gegenüber. Anders als die Homöusianer blieb er jedoch nicht bei einer generellen Umschreibung der Einheit der *trias* stehen, sondern suchte dafür auch eine technische Definition. So orientierte er die *via media*, welche sich nunmehr immer mehr aufdrängte, zur dogmatischen Definition von *mia ousia – treis hypostaseis* hin¹⁰⁸.

Mit der schon sich bei Origenes ankündigenden, seit Nizäa aber schärfer gemachten Unterscheidung der Nicht-Geschöpflichkeit und der Geschöpflichkeit war noch eine andere Frage verbunden. Indem man Christus eindeu-

103 Vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 179 ff., mit Texten und Studien.

104 Vgl. Athanasius, *Epistula ad Serapionem* I 14 (AthW 1/1,4, 486–489).

105 Vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 179 ff.

106 Basilius, *De Spiritu Sancto* XVI 37 f. (SC 17 bis, 374–384); *Ep* 210,5 (Courtonne II, 194–196).

107 Basilius, *CE* I 23 (SC 299, 252–256); *CE* II 21 (SC 305, 84–88); *De Spiritu Sancto* VIII 21 (SC 17bis, 318–320) und Gregor von Nyssa, *Ep* (*Basili*) 189,7 f. (Courtonne II, 139–141); *Ep* 5 (GNO VIII/2, 31–34).

108 Vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 176 f. Zum Ursprung der Doppelformel A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band 1: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 539–547, mit Texten und Studien.

tig auf die Seite Gottes stellte, konnte man den Schwierigkeiten nicht mehr ausweichen, die mit den damit zusammenhängenden Unterscheidungen zwischen *eingeborener* und *erstgeborener*¹⁰⁹, zwischen göttlicher und menschlicher Sohnschaft, zwischen ungeschaffener und geschaffener Natur gegeben waren¹¹⁰. Mit anderen Worten, man konnte nicht die *theologia* von der *oikonomia* abheben, ohne sich Gedanken über die Einheit Christi zu machen¹¹¹. Apollinaris hat dieses Problem klar gesehen¹¹². Basilius hingegen wollte nicht darauf eingehen¹¹³. Gregor von Nazianz und Gregor von Nyssa werden sich erst nach 381 damit befassen¹¹⁴.

Damit ist indes der theologiegeschichtliche Hintergrund des *Contra Eunomium* des Gregor von Nyssa erst thematisch skizziert. Um ihn voll zu verstehen, muß man auch auf die formalen Elemente des damaligen theologischen Schaffens eingehen. In diesem Zusammenhang verdient in erster Linie beachtet zu werden, wie sehr die theologische Methode Gregors rhetorisch geprägt ist¹¹⁵. Diese grundlegende Tatsache wird selbst heute noch immer nicht genügend gewürdigt. Schon seit langem betrachtet man wohl Gregor als großen Philosophen. Noch immer tut man dies jedoch in weitem Maße auf Kosten seiner literarischen Bildung¹¹⁶. Gewiß übergeht kaum jemand in seiner Biographie den Umstand, daß er bei seinem Bruder 355/6 Rhetorikunterricht erhalten hatte

109 Vgl. E. Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani*, 72 ff.

110 Vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 139–145: „Der nizanische Ansatz zur christologischen Frage“, sowie T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 493; zur christologischen Problematik bei Eunomius.

111 Zur Auffassung des Eunomius über *theologia* und *oikonomia*, vgl. E. Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani*, 95, sowie auch R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Band II, Basel 1954, 46.

112 Vgl. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band I: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, 480–494.

113 Vgl. o. S. 145.

114 Vgl. o. S. 145.

115 Vgl. zum Fragestand vor allem C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, in: A. Spira – C. Klock, *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa: Translation and Commentary. Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge 1981, 319–354, bes. 319 f. Dazu weiter H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 863–895, und M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nyse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 11 (mit enttäuschend wenig Angaben). Vgl. ferner G.L. Kustas, „Saint Basil and the Rhetorical Tradition“, in: P.J. Fedwick (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, Part I, Toronto 1981, 221–279.

116 Vgl. die Kritiken bei C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, 319. Dabei ist auch zu beachten, wie oft die rhetorischen (= literarischen) Gesichtspunkte auf das rein Sprachliche, auf die „richtige Handhabung der Sprache“ reduziert werden. Vgl. dagegen Quintilianus, *Institut* V 10,54. In dieser Hinsicht ist ein Vergleich zwischen

und dann zuerst die Tätigkeit eines Rhetors ausübte¹¹⁷. Man ist sich im allgemeinen auch im klaren, daß seine zum Teil satyrischen Ausfälle gegenüber der Rhetorik, im besonderen gegenüber den rhetorischen Künsten des Eunomius, selbst zu seiner Rhetorik gehören¹¹⁸. Wie schon andere christliche und nicht-christliche Autoren beabsichtigte er dabei nur, alle Spiegelfechtereien zu brandmarken und auf eine Beweisführung zu dringen, welche nicht in der Schönheit der Worte, sondern in der Kraft der Wahrheit begründet war¹¹⁹. Nicht umsonst hatte er sich selbst um die literarische Anerkennung seines *Contra Eunomium* von seiten des großen Rhetors Libanius bemüht¹²⁰. Es fehlt auch nicht an Untersuchungen zur Frage, wie Gregor in die griechische Literaturgeschichte einzuordnen ist, ob er in seinen Schriften mehr dem Klassizismus oder Asianismus verpflichtet ist¹²¹. Schließlich bemüht man sich schon verschiedentlich um den nach traditionellen Regeln gestalteten Aufbau einzelner

den beiden Artikeln Gregor von Nazianz und Gregor von Nyssa im *RAC* sehr instruktiv. Während B. Wyss das Literarische auf breitem Raum zur Geltung bringt, vernachlässigt es H. Dörrie weitgehendst.

- 117 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Op hom* (PG 44, 125B), und *Ep.* 13,4 ff. Dazu G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 53; W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 302 und bes. G. Lazzati, „Basilio di Cesarea insegnò retorica?“, in: A. Pincherle (ed.), *Studi in onore di Alberto Pincherle*, vol. I, Roma 1967, 284–292.
- 118 Vgl., zur Polemik gegen Eunomius, Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 11–17 (GNO I, 25–27). Wie sehr man bei dieser Frage auf den ganzen Kontext achten muß, zeigen zwei gegensätzliche Texte Gregors. In *Bas* (GNO X/1, 110), lobt er an seinem Bruder die göttliche und profane Wissenschaft. Vgl. auch *Mart* II (GNO X/1, 160–161). In der Rede *In ordinationem suam* [*Deit Euag*] (GNO IX, 337,15–338,13), weist er hingegen rühmend auf die mesopotamischen Mönche hin, die keine Rhetorik studiert haben. Vgl. dazu G. Kretschmar, „Die Theologie der Kappadokier und die asketischen Bewegungen in Kleinasien im 4. Jahrhundert“, 106 f. Vgl. zur ganzen Frage, F. Mann, „Gregor, Rhetor et Pastor. Interpretation des Proömiums der Schrift Gregors von Nyssa *De infantibus praemature abreptis*“, *VigChr* 31 (1977) 126–147, bes. 126 ff.; C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, 333 ff. Zur Stilkritik Gregors an Eunomius, und bes. E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius, le technogue“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) 47–72, bes. 50–56, sowie T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 504 f. mit dem Hinweis auf E. Norden, *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, Band II, Leipzig 1898, 561.
- 119 Vgl. F. Mann, „Gregor, Rhetor et Pastor. Interpretation des Proömiums der Schrift Gregors von Nyssa *De infantibus praemature abreptis*“, *VigChr* 31 (1977) 127. Dazu Gregor von Nyssa, *An et res* (GNO III/3, 111–112).
- 120 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Ep.* 15,4 (GNO VIII/2, 49).
- 121 Vgl. C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, 338, mit dem Hinweis auf W. Jaeger, *Das frühe Christentum und die griechische Bildung*, Berlin 1963, 63, sowie B. Wyss, „Gregor von Nazianz“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 799 f.

Schriften, besonders der Reden, in welchen Gregor sich naturgemäß am meisten an die *ars bene loquendi* gehalten hat¹²². Doch haben sich bei weitem nicht alle genügend über die grundlegende Tatsache Rechenschaft gegeben, daß die damalige Kultur nicht von der Philosophie, sondern von der Sophistik geprägt war¹²³. Wer indes zu wenig beachtet, wie sehr im 4. Jahrhundert die Philosophie, speziell die Logik der Redekunst dienen mußte, wird leicht versucht sein, gewisse methodische Eigenheiten, wie die Betonung des *skopos* oder der *akolouthia* von der Philosophie her zu erklären anstatt aus den rhetorischen Gewohnheiten, wie sie vor allem für den Prolog einer Rede und analog dazu für den Prolog eines Traktates oder eines Kommentars üblich waren¹²⁴. Er wird vielleicht auch bei der Kritik Gregors gegenüber der Beweisführung des Eunomius die dabei verwandten rhetorischen Regeln übergehen¹²⁵. Im besonderen wird er übersehen, daß die von Gregor häufig gemachte Unterscheidung zwischen rationalen Überlegungen und Beweisen aus der Bibel¹²⁶ letztlich der

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- 122 Dieser Gesichtspunkt ist wohl der am meisten untersuchte. Vgl. schon L. Méridier, *L'influence de la seconde Sophistique sur l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nysse*, Rennes 1906, sowie in der neuesten Zeit die Untersuchungen von C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, 319–354; F. Mann, „Gregor, Rhetor et Pastor. Interpretation des Proömiums der Schrift Gregors von Nyssa *De infantibus praemature abreptis*“, *VigChr* 31 (1977) 126–147; M. Harl, „L'éloge de la fête de Pâques dans le prologue du Sermon *In Sanctum Pascha* de Grégoire de Nysse (*In Sanctum Pascha* p. 245,4–253,18)“, in: A. Spira – C. Klock, *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa: Translation and Commentary. Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge 1981, 81–100, wie auch die dieser Problematik gewidmeten Beiträge in A. Spira (ed.), *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa. Proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge 1984.
- 123 Vgl. E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius, le technographe“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) 50–56, der den Zusammenhang von Rhetorik und Philosophie im 4. Jh. klar herausstellt.
- 124 Vgl. bes. J. Daniélou, „Akolouthia chez Grégoire de Nysse“, *RSR* 27 (1953) 219–249, und Id., „Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle“, *REG* 69 (1956) 412–432, sowie die davon abhängigen Studien. Dazu auch M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 11 f.
- 125 Vgl. z. B. T. A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 504–508, wo wohl auf die Stilkritik, nicht aber auf die technische Beweisführung Rücksicht genommen wird. Dazu Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 217–222 (GNO I, 90 f.).
- 126 Vgl. etwa M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 74, mit dem ganzen Kontext über das Verhältnis von „discours de la foi“ und „discours de la verité“. Dazu vor allem Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 282–316 (GNO I, 109–121): zuerst Widerlegung der rationalen Argumente, dann Schriftbeweis mit Hilfe eines rationalen Schemas, welches schon für die Widerlegung verwandt worden ist.

rhetorischen Unterscheidung zwischen den *pisteis entechnoi* (*probationes artificiales*) und den *pisteis atechnoi* (*probationes inartificiales*) entspricht¹²⁷. Die ersten werden mit Hilfe der Rhetorik im Sachverhalt selbst gefunden. Die zweiten hingegen stammen von außen: es sind die *exempla* und *auctoritates*. Es ist nun aber offensichtlich, daß man ohne Berücksichtigung dieses ganzen rhetorischen Hintergrundes weder den Aufbau der Schriften Gregors verstehen, noch das Gewicht der darin angewandten Argumente exakt abwägen kann¹²⁸.

Es ist nicht möglich, hier weiter zu verfolgen, welchen Platz Gregor in der Sophistik der zweiten Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts einnimmt, welches Verhältnis er zu Libanius hatte, wie er sich in dieser Hinsicht von Gregor von Nazianz und vor allem von seinem Bruder Basilius unterschied¹²⁹. Es mag jedoch nützlich sein, noch auf zwei Beispiele hinzuweisen, die für das Studium des *Contra Eunomium* hilfreich sein könnten. Vorerst eine frühere Schrift von Gregor selbst, der Traktat *De virginitate*¹³⁰. Im Vorwort charakterisiert der Autor selbst seine Schrift als einen gemischten *logos*, als eine Lob- und Mahnrede¹³¹. Er gibt zudem, wie es üblich war, seine Methode an¹³² und beschließt den Prolog mit einer Art Inhaltsangabe¹³³. Die eigentliche Darlegung ist, wie im Prolog angegeben, antithetisch aufgebaut: Ehe – Jungfräulichkeit¹³⁴. Der positive Teil wiederum umfaßt ganz klar technische und atechnische Beweise. Das Ganze wird, mit einer sich steigernden Mahnung abgeschlossen. – Das zweite Beispiel, die um 360 verfaßte 1. Apologie des Eunomius, ist wohl noch instruktiver¹³⁵.

127 Vgl. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, I, München 1960, 350 ff.

128 Selbst E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius, le technogue“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) 47–72, der das Problem gut erkannt hat, läßt sich in der Beurteilung der *technologia* allzu sehr von den ihrerseits rhetorisch gefärbten abschätzigen Äußerungen der auf die Orthodoxie bedachten Kirchenväter gegenüber Eunomius leiten.

129 Einen guten Ausgangspunkt zu einer solchen Untersuchung würde der Artikel von B. Wyss, „Gregor von Nazianz“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 793–863, bieten.

130 M. Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la Virginité*, SC 119, Paris 1966, geht leider auf den rhetorischen Aufbau dieser Schrift nicht ein. Vgl. hingegen F. Mann, „Gregor, Rhetor et Pastor. Interpretation des Proömiums der Schrift Gregors von Nyssa *De infantibus praemature abreptis*“, *VigChr* 31 (1977) 145 f.

131 Vgl. *Virg praef.* 1,15; 2,5; 2,9 (SC 119, 248; 250).

132 Vgl. bes. *Virg praef.* 1,14–27 (SC 119, 248).

133 *Virg praef.*: *akolouthia ton noematon* (SC 119, 252–254).

134 Vgl. *Virg praef.* 1,16 ff. (SC 119, 248).

135 Zu den verschiedenen Problemen dieser Schrift, Datierung, Eigenart und Bedeutung, vgl. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome (livres 11–11). Eunome de Cyzique, Apologie*, SC 305, Paris 1983, 179–229, sowie T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 303–346. Leider

Nicht umsonst suchte Basilius, sie als rhetorische Schulübung lächerlich zu machen¹³⁶. Eunomius befolgt tatsächlich darin das Schema der Gerichtsrede. Nach der *captatio benevolentiae*, in welcher er die Leser zu einer gerechten und verantwortungsvollen Stellungnahme aufruft (nn. 1–3), faßt er seine Auffassung in der Form eines Glaubensbekenntnisses zusammen (nn. 4f.)¹³⁷ und gibt das Ziel und die Methode seiner Darlegungen an (n. 6)¹³⁸. Er behandelt im *corpus* seiner Rede eine These nach der anderen, zuerst positiv, dann negativ. Zum Teil stützt er die einzelnen Thesen auch mit Schriftargumenten ab (vgl. bes. n. 24). Das Ganze wird mit einem Aufruf an die Richter abgeschlossen (n. 27,20–53). Für das richtige Verständnis ist nun die Unterscheidung von technischen und atechnischen Beweisen wichtig. Ohne sie kann man nämlich die Bedeutung der Schriftargumente im Verhältnis zu den dialektischen Argumenten nicht richtig werten. Überdies erhält die Verteidigung ihren vollen Sinn vom Glaubensbekenntnis, das gleichsam die *summa* der ganzen Rede darstellt und den Schlüssel für die folgenden Darlegungen enthält¹³⁹. Basilius und mit ihm auch Gregor haben dem nicht genügend Rechnung getragen¹⁴⁰. Sie haben Eunomius vielmehr, übrigens wiederum nach rhetorischen Gepflogenheiten, die Berufung auf die Tradition einfach bestritten¹⁴¹. Obgleich sie selbst

befaßt sich keiner der beiden Autoren mit dem rhetorischen Hintergrund des Aufbaues dieser Schrift. Es ist denn auch bezeichnend, daß Sesboüé 235, den ersten Teil des Prologes mit „Préambule rhétorique“, und 241, einen weiteren Teil mit „Préambule méthodologique“ überschreibt, wie wenn nicht der ganze Prolog nach rhetorischen Regeln aufgebaut wäre.

- 136 Basilius, *CE* II 1,12 ff. (SC 303, 10) und *CE* III 1,9–13 (SC 305, 144). Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 32 (GNO I, 32). Dazu E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius ‚le technogue‘“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) 47 ff., C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, 334 f.
- 137 Zu den Quellen dieses Glaubensbekenntnisses, vgl. T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 309 ff. (von Eunomius selbst verfaßt); B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome*, SC 305, Paris 1983, 240–243 (guter Fragestand).
- 138 E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius ‚le technogue‘“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) 65 f., ist in der Beurteilung der Haltung des Eunomius gegenüber der Tradition viel zu negativ.
- 139 Vgl. die grundlegende These von *Apologia* 2 (SC 305, 238), bei Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 151–154 (GNO I, 71 ff.). Zum Begriff *hypothesis* (= *summa*), vgl. F. Mann, „Gregor, Rhetor et Pastor. Interpretation des Proömiums der Schrift Gregors von Nyssa *De infantibus praemature abreptis*“, *VigChr* 31 (1977) 140.
- 140 Vgl. zur Beurteilung des Eunomius durch Gregor, E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius ‚le technogue‘“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) 56–61.
- 141 S. Vollenweider, *Neuplatonische und christliche Theologie bei Synesios von Kyrene*, Göttingen 1988, 110–111.

ihre Widerlegungen nicht streng nach den rhetorischen Regeln aufbauen, sondern vielmehr einfach Eunomius folgen¹⁴², stehen sie auch so unter den Gesetzen der Rhetorik und können darum nur von da aus ganz verstanden werden.

Allein im Blick auf den rhetorischen Kontext, wie er nicht nur für Gregor und seine griechischen und lateinischen Zeitgenossen bestimmend war, läßt sich im besonderen der Gebrauch der damals geläufigen philosophischen Anschauungen vollumfänglich begreifen¹⁴³. Ohne Zweifel beschränkte sich dieser nicht bloß auf die rationale, oft in syllogistischer Form durchgeführte Beweisführung. Philosophische Begriffe und Schemata waren weitgehend auch für die Diskussion der Schriftargumente wegleitend¹⁴⁴. Dazu ist die ganze vom griechischen Denken geprägte Mentalität Gregors mitzubberücksichtigen. Doch kann man das Gewicht, das dieser selbst seinen rationalen Erwägungen beimißt, erst dann genau bewerten, wenn man vor Augen hält, daß er und die christlichen Denker von damals sich an die Unterscheidung zwischen den *probationes artificiales* und den *probationes inartificiales* hielten, diesen allerdings eine größere Autorität zubilligten als jenen¹⁴⁵. Es ist hier nicht der Ort, den ganzen, oft und viel verhandelten Komplex der Einflüsse der griechischen Philosophie auf Gregor zu besprechen¹⁴⁶. Es mag jedoch tunlich sein, wenigstens

gen 1985, und bes. C. Klock, „Gregors Osterpredigten in ihrer literarhistorischen Tradition“, 333 f., mit CE III/5 24 (GNO II, 168).

- 142 Zum Aufbau von Gregors CE, vgl. E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen 1966, 98 ff., und zum rhetorischen Ansatz der Theologie des Eunomius, vgl. L. Abramowski, „Eunomius“, RAC 6 (1966) 944, mit CE III/9 15–16 (GNO II, 269), und CE III/10 15 (GNO II, 294 f.).
- 143 Vgl. E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius, le technogue“, RHE 40 (1944/5) 54, und S. Vollenweider, *Neuplatonische und christliche Theologie bei Synesios von Kyrene*, Göttingen 1985, 20 f.
- 144 Vgl. z. B. Gregor von Nyssa, *An et res* (GNO III/3, 111–123): 1 Kor 15 wird, ausgehend von einer Definition der Auferstehung, mit Hilfe zweier Prinzipien, der Gleichstellung von Anfang und Ende und der Wiederherstellung nach dem Bilde Gottes erklärt. Ebenso Eunomius, *Apologia* 24 (SC 305, 282 ff.): Kol 1,15 f. wird mit Hilfe der Unterscheidung von *ousia* und *energeia* interpretiert. Vgl. zur Frage C. Kannengiesser, „Logique et idées motrices dans le recours biblique selon Grégoire de Nysse“, in: H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites Internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1976, 85–102; und M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 65–81.
- 145 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, CE I 156–160 (GNO I, 73 ff.); *An et res* (GNO III/3, 32–34; 43–44). Dazu H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, RAC 12 (1983) 890.
- 146 Vgl. vor allem E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen

auf folgende drei Gesichtspunkte kurz hinzuweisen. Vorerst einmal zur Frage der philosophischen Quellen! Es ist gewiß berechtigt, bei ihrer Untersuchung jenen an Aristoteles interessierten Neuplatonikern besondere Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken, welche Gregor zeitlich und vielleicht räumlich am nächsten standen. So vor allem Jamblichus († 330), dem Schulhaupt der allerdings ausgeprägt heidnischen Schule Syriens¹⁴⁷. Selbst eine Lektüre ihrer Schriften wird man nicht von vornherein ausschließen können. Doch wird man immer gegenwärtig halten, wie sehr das griechische Erbe ganz allgemein weiterwirkte. Im besonderen ist nicht zu übersehen, in welchem weitem Maß schon die vorausgehende christliche Tradition, der Jude Philo miteingeschlossen, philosophische Ideen für die Entfaltung der biblischen Botschaft übernommen hatte¹⁴⁸. So können die Einflüsse des mittleren Platonismus auf die Apologeten und die origenische Tradition kaum überschätzt werden¹⁴⁹. Selbst ein Eunomius ist nicht vom Neuplatonismus, sondern vielmehr vom mittleren Platonismus und noch mehr vom Stoizismus her zu erklären¹⁵⁰. Als noch wichtiger muß die Rolle des Eusebius in der Vermittlung plotinischen Gedankengutes angesehen werden¹⁵¹. Basilius bezog sich wohl, besonders seit 375, auf Texte Plotins. Aber nur *Enneade* 5,1 und vielleicht 6,9 übernahm er nicht aus Eusebius, sondern wohl aus einem von der gewöhnlichen porphyrianischen Textüberlieferung unabhängig zirkulierenden Traktat¹⁵². Gregor von Nazianz kennt um

1966; Id., „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern *Contra Eunomium*“, 230–244; J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, in: P.J. Fedwick (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, Part I, Toronto 1981, 137–220 (J.M. Rist, *Platonism and its Christian Heritage*, London 1985, xii; H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 [1983] 863–895).

147 Vgl. vor allem die Studien von J. Daniélou, „Grégoire de Nysse et la philosophie“, in: H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites Internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1976, 3–18. Dazu die Kriterien von J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 185–188.

148 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern *Contra Eunomium*“, 241 ff.

149 Vgl. M. Baltes, „Zur Philosophie des Platonikers Attikos“, in: H.-D. Blume – F. Mann, *Platonismus und Christentum. Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie*, Münster 1983, 38–57; C. de Vogel, „Der sog. Mittelplatonismus, überwiegend eine Philosophie der Diesseitigkeit?“, in: H.-D. Blume – F. Mann, *Platonismus und Christentum. Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie*, Münster 1983, 277–301.

150 Vgl. T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 288 ff. (Einfluß auf Aetius); 321 f. (Einfluß auf Eunomius), und bes. J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 185–188.

151 Vgl. J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 190–220.

152 Vgl. J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 215–219.

380 auch *Enneade* 5,2¹⁵³. In seiner Stellungnahme gegenüber der griechischen Philosophie zählt er jedoch keine neuen Philosophen auf¹⁵⁴. Gregor von Nyssa schließlich hängt in *De virginitate* von Basilius ab¹⁵⁵. Man kann also für die siebziger Jahre wohl von einem besonderen Interesse für Plotin sprechen. Aber es ist immer gut zu sehen, auf welchem Weg die plotinischen Gedanken zu den Kappadoziern gelangten; nach Rist sicher nicht durch Jamblichus und Porphyrius¹⁵⁶.

Weiter ist zweifelsohne festzuhalten, daß die Kappadozier wie auch die anderen Kirchenväter ihrer Zeit nicht im modernen Sinn zwischen Philosophie und Theologie unterschieden¹⁵⁷. Für sie existierte nur eine Wahrheit, ob sie aus der Schöpfungsordnung oder aus der biblischen Offenbarung geschöpft wird¹⁵⁸. Immerhin stellten sie, wie schon angedeutet, den Glauben klar über die Erwägungen der Vernunft¹⁵⁹. Vor allem nahmen sie eine gewisse Distanz gegenüber der Philosophie der draußen stehenden Heiden¹⁶⁰. Wie gegenüber der heidnischen Belletristik verfolgten sie auch gegenüber den philosophischen Schriften das Prinzip der Auswahl (*chresis*)¹⁶¹. Beachtlicherweise verweist Basilius freilich in seiner Schrift *Ad iuvenes* nur auf literarische und parä-

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- 153 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 29,2 (SC 250, 178–180) Dazu B. Wyss, „Gregor von Nazianz“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 833 ff.: Neuplatonismus bei Gregor mit Texten.
- 154 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 27,9 (SC 250, 92–94).
- 155 Vgl. zur Frage J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 216 ff., der jedoch *De Spiritu* Gregor von Nyssa zuschreiben und dementsprechend eine umgekehrte Abhängigkeit annehmen möchte.
- 156 Vgl. J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 212–215.
- 157 Vgl. J. Daniélou, „Grégoire de Nysse et la philosophie“, 16 f.; H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 883 f.; M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 13 f.: „Gregor kann nicht einfach als Philosoph bezeichnet werden“. Dazu auch A. Schindler, *Die Begründung der Trinitätslehre in der eunomianischen Kontroverse*, 100 f.: über die Einheit von Vernunft und Offenbarungserkenntnis.
- 158 Vgl. etwa Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 186 (GNO I, 81), wo er Eunomius sowohl die Philosophie der Griechen als die *theopneustoi phonai* und *koinai ennoiai* entgegenstellt.
- 159 Vgl. Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 28,28 (SC 250, 162–164); Gregor von Nyssa, *An et res* (GNO III/3, 92).
- 160 Vgl. A. Warkotsch, *Antike Philosophie im Urteil der Kirchenväter*, München 1973, 400–410.
- 161 Vgl. das schöne Beispiel bei Gregor von Nyssa, *An et res* (GNO III/3, 80–82), im Zusammenhang mit der Auferstehungslehre. Zur Frage im allg. W. Jaeger, *Das frühe Christentum und die griechische Bildung*, Berlin 1963, 60 f., und C. Gnlika, *Chrêsis. Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der antiken Kultur*, Stuttgart 1984, sowie B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome* I, Paris 1982, SC 299, 75–95.

netische, nicht aber auf philosophische Gesichtspunkte¹⁶². Jedenfalls erwähnt er darin nur alte Philosophen, wie Plato und Sokrates¹⁶³. Offenbar hatte er so wenig wie Gregor von Nazianz die Gepflogenheit, philosophische Schriften zu lesen. Er wurde vielmehr von seinen theologischen Anliegen her gedrängt, philosophische Traktate oder auch nur Anthologien und noch häufiger bloß in der christlichen Tradition bereits heimische philosophische Ideen zu benützen. Man wird eine ähnliche Haltung bei Cyrill von Alexandrien finden, der, abgesehen von seiner Apologie gegen Julian, nur auf die Philosophie zurückgreift, wo das bereits vor ihm in der theologischen Tradition geschehen ist¹⁶⁴. Gregor von Nyssa muß hierin allerdings weiter gegangen sein, wie vor allem die Rezeption des *Phaidon* in *De anima et resurrectione* aus dem Jahr 379 beweist¹⁶⁵. Doch selbst in seinem Fall handelt es sich nicht um zeitgenössische philosophische Schriften. Im übrigen zitiert er die heidnischen Schriftsteller nicht wörtlich, sondern übernimmt aus ihnen vielmehr „Gedankenizitate“¹⁶⁶.

Was endlich die Gotteslehre angeht, die hier speziell zur Diskussion steht, bemühten sich die Kappadozier, von Basilius angefangen, bekanntlich darum, mit philosophischen Mitteln, sei es stoischer, sei es aristotelischer Herkunft, die trinitarische Terminologie zu definieren¹⁶⁷. Wichtig war weiterhin für sie die damalige Rezeption antiker Überlegungen über die Erkenntnis des Wesens aus seinen Wirkungen¹⁶⁸ sowie der sprachphilosophische Zusammenhang von Wesen und Namen¹⁶⁹. Schließlich wird Gregor von Nyssa im Anschluß an Ari-

162 Vgl. M. Naldini, *Basilio di Cesarea, Discorso ai Giovani*, Firenze 1984, 26–30; sowie J.M. Rist, „Basils ‚Neoplatonism‘: Its Background and Nature“, 219 f.

163 Basilius, *Oratio ad adolescentes* VI 7; IX 16 [Plato] und VII 6 ff. [Sokrates] (Naldini 104; 124; 106–110).

164 Vgl. G. Jouassard, „Cyrill von Alexandrien“, *RAC* 3 (1957) 499–516, bes. 501 f.

165 Vgl. Ch. Apostolopoulos, *Phaedo Christianus: Studien zur Verbindung und Abwägung des Verhältnisses zwischen dem platonischen „Phaidon“ und dem Dialog Gregors von Nyssa „Über die Seele und die Auferstehung“*, Frankfurt 1986; sowie H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 889 f.

166 Vgl. H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 884–887.

167 Vgl. G.C. Stead, „Ontologie und Terminologie bei Gregor von Nyssa“, in: H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites Internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1976, 107–119; E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 243 ff.; A.M. Ritter, „Eunomius“, *TRE* 10 (1982) 525–528.

168 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen 1966, 95–98, sowie T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 334 f., zu Eunomius, *Apologia* 20 (SC 305, 275 ff. und 384), zu Basilius, *CE* II 30–34 (SC 305, 124–142).

169 Vgl. L. Abramowski, „Eunomios“, *RAC* 6 (1966) 944 ff., und E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlich-*

stoteles den Begriff der Unendlichkeit Gottes weiterentwickeln¹⁷⁰. Bei all diesen Erwägungen philosophischer Art darf jedoch der entscheidende Anstoß des Grundanliegens der ganzen arianischen Kontroverse nicht außer acht gelassen werden¹⁷¹. Gegenüber Arius und seinen Anhängern hatte das Konzil von Nizäa den eingeborenen Sohn auf die Seite des Schöpfers gestellt und damit unter dem maßgeblichen Einfluß der biblischen Lehre von der *creatio ex nihilo* die origenische Unterscheidung zwischen der Trinität und der Schöpfung endgültig definiert¹⁷². In der Folge konnte man das *gezeugt, nicht geschaffen*, das *physei*, nicht *thesei*, aus dem Sein, nicht aus dem Willen auf den Sohn und analog auf den Heiligen Geist beschränken oder eine solche Unterscheidung zwischen Sohn und Geist einerseits und den Geschöpfen andererseits bestreiten oder wenigstens abschwächen. Es gab jedoch keinen anderen Ansatz mehr für eine philosophische Vertiefung des Taufglaubens¹⁷³.

In der Linie der rhetorischen Regeln betreffend die Argumentation in der Rede ist auch der theologische Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift bei Gregor zu sehen¹⁷⁴. Die eigentlichen Schriftargumente gehören nämlich offensichtlich zu seinen *probationes inartificiales*. Sie werden von außen in die Beweisführung hineingenommen, stammen nicht aus dem dialektischen Instrumentarium der

keit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa, Göttingen 1966, 183–196; Id., „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 233–238.

170 Vgl. E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen 1966, und Id., „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 238 ff.

171 Vgl. die Kritiken zur Darstellung von E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 244–250, bes. 248.

172 Vgl. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 110 und 130–133.

173 Selbst E. Mühlenberg, geht von dieser Voraussetzung aus, wenn er festhält: „Man wird mit allem Vorbehalt sagen können, daß eine solche Neubesinnung auf den Gottesbegriff nur in dem Kontext der christlichen Tradition des 4. Jh. möglich war“ (E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, 236), und dann ausdrücklich auf das Konzil von Nizäa hinweist. Vgl. dazu A. Schindler, *Die Begründung der Trinitätslehre in der eunomianischen Kontroverse*, 164 f., der die Bedeutung des Athanasius betont und dabei *Contra Arianos* II 31 und *Epistula ad Serapionem* I 27 zitiert.

174 Vgl. die gute Übersicht über die Forschung bei I. Gargano, *La teoria di Gregorio di Nissa sul cantico dei Cantici*, OChrA 216, Roma 1981, 13–44. Unter den angeführten Studien verdient besonders Beachtung M. Alexandre, „La théorie de l'exégèse dans le *De hominis opificio* et l'*In Hexaemeron*“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse: Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 87–110, bes. 87, nt. 1, mit den Hinweisen auf die methodologischen Texte in *c.E.* Vgl. weiter M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983.

retorischen Kunst¹⁷⁵. Wie bei allen christlichen Theologen, zum Teil jedoch auch bei den heidnischen Philosophen und Juristen, kommt diesen *pisteis atechnoi* eine größere Autorität zu¹⁷⁶. Die Schriftargumente sind darum nicht bloß Illustration, *argumenta ad hominem, praestructiones*, wie Tertullian sagen würde¹⁷⁷. Selbst dort, wo vom *genus litterarium* her, das heißt praktisch, von der Rücksicht auf den Gegner oder die eigenen Leser her die rationale Argumentation quantitativ überwiegt, kommt es letztlich dennoch auf die Kraft des Wortes Gottes an. Das gilt selbst für Eunomius, auch wenn es seine Gegner nicht wahrhaben wollten¹⁷⁸, und natürlich erst recht von Gregor von Nyssa¹⁷⁹.

Diese Form des Rückgriffes auf die Heilige Schrift, wie sie sich im vierten Jahrhundert während des arianischen Streites auf der Basis der früheren christlichen und selbst rabbinischen Schriftbeweise entwickelt hat, kann als dogmatische Exegese bezeichnet werden¹⁸⁰. Um die Tragweite voll zu erfassen, mag es indes nützlich sein, einen Blick auf die biblische Hermeneutik zu werfen, wie sie in den eigentlichen Schriftkommentaren oder auch in den Homilien zur Anwendung kam. Wie wohl bekannt, hingen die östlichen Kirchenväter des vierten Jahrhunderts, welche hier allein in Frage stehen, in dieser Art der Auslegung vor allem von der Exegese ab, welche Origenes im Anschluß an die rabbinische, urchristliche und alexandrinische Bibelerklärung entwickelt hatte. Diese Exegese war vorn Bestreben beherrscht, den Buchstaben zum Geist zu übersteigen, von der *historia* zur *theoria* zu gelangen¹⁸¹. Aus apologetischen und spirituellen Gründen wollten die Exegeten nicht beim obvalen Sinn stehen bleiben, sondern suchten grundsätzlich eine tiefere Bedeutung, und zwar mit einem doppelten Anliegen: der *psychagogia*, der Einführung in die Mysterien Christi, und der *opheleia*, dem Nutzen für das geistliche Leben

175 Vgl. o. S. 150.

176 Vgl. K.H. Lütcke, „*Auctoritas*“ bei Augustin, Stuttgart 1968, 34–51.

177 Vgl. Tertullian, *Resur* 18 1; 20 1 (Evans 46 ff.; 52 ff.).

178 Vgl. T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 335–343, mit Eunomius, *Apologia* 21–25 (SC 305, 276–286 und 541), mit dem Hinweis auf die wachsende Bedeutung der Schriftargumente im Neuarrianismus. Dazu Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* III/9 54 (GNO II, 284 f.).

179 Vgl. C. Kannengiesser, „Logique et idées motrices dans le recours biblique selon Grégoire de Nysse“, in: H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites Internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1976, 100 f., mit den Hinweisen auf die Bibelstellen in *CE* I.

180 Vgl. zur Geschichte der Exegese im 4. Jh. vor allem M. Simonetti, *Lettera e/o Allegoria. Un contributo alla storia dell'esegesi patristica*, Roma 1985, 109–230, bes. 109 f., mit der dort verzeichneten Literatur.

181 Das ist die Hauptthese des zit. Werkes von M. Simonetti.

der Gemeinde oder der einzelnen Seele¹⁸². Im Laufe des vierten Jahrhunderts bekam jedoch die Bemühung um den historischen Sinn eine zunehmend größere Wichtigkeit. Diese Entwicklung setzte mit Eusebius von Cäsarea ein und erreichte in Theodor von Mopsuestia ihren Höhepunkt. Es ist nicht leicht, die Gründe dafür zu finden. Einerseits nahm sicher die Beschäftigung mit den neutestamentlichen Schriften zu, welche sich eher für eine geschichtliche Auslegung anboten. Andererseits stieg damals das geschichtliche Interesse der Christen allgemein, wie Eusebius, Laktanz und ihre Nachfolger bezeugen. Nicht weniger wichtig war indes, daß damals die Kommentare in ihrem Aufbau: Prolog mit *skopos* und *hypothesis* (Zusammenfassung), Textabschnitte (Lemmata), mit Paraphrase und oft mehrfachen Einzelerklärungen, mehr als zuvor dem *genus* der profanen Kommentare entsprachen, wie sich an den Paulus-Kommentaren eines Marius Victorinus¹⁸³ oder an den Psalmenkommentaren eines Theodoret von Cyrus leicht aufweisen läßt¹⁸⁴.

Was die dogmatische Exegese als solche angeht, handelt es sich darin um den Gebrauch oder auch um die Auslegung einzelner Texte im Interesse gewisser theologischer Positionen. Dabei kommen Kriterien zur Anwendung, die selbst schon dogmatisch bestimmt sind, wie vor allem die sog. *regula canonica*, die Unterscheidung der göttlichen und menschlichen Aussagen über Jesus Christus¹⁸⁵. Diese dogmatisch interessierte Auslegung der Schrift legte naturgemäß ihrerseits mehr Gewicht auf den wörtlichen oder historischen Sinn der Texte, abgesehen davon, daß sie sich vorzüglich auf neutestamentliche Texte bezog. Im übrigen machte die Sorge um die Orthodoxie sich auch in den Kommentaren und Homilien stark bemerkbar¹⁸⁶. Das widersprach indes keineswegs den Gepflogenheiten der damaligen Textauslegung, etwa in den philosophischen Schriften. Auch in den nicht-christlichen Kommentaren finden sich

182 Vgl. dazu C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese*, Köln-Bonn 1974, 78 f.; 164 ff. Die ganze Frage müsste jedoch näher untersucht werden.

183 Vgl. F. Gori (ed.), *Mario Vittorino. Commentari alle Epistole di Paolo agli Efesini; ai Galati, ai Filipesi*, Torino 1981.

184 Vgl. Theodoret von Cyrus, *CompPs praef.* (PG 80, 857 A–860 A). Dazu C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese*, 68 f., sowie M. Simonetti, *Lettera e/o Allegoria. Un contributo alla storia dell'esegesi patristica*, 190–201.

185 Vgl. im allg. B. Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche*, Düsseldorf 1985, 232, und bes. M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 76 f.; 239–242; 268–273.

186 Vgl. etwa Gregor von Nyssa, *Creat* 1 (GNO Supplementum 1, 6).

im Anschluß an die auszulegende Stelle Exkurse, in welchen die Kommentatoren ihre eigenen Ideen entwickelten¹⁸⁷.

Um die Frage umfassend zu beantworten, wie Gregor selbst sich in diese allgemeine Entwicklung eingefügt hat, ist schließlich zu beachten, welche Quellen er gerade auch in seiner mehr dogmatischen Exegese benützt hat. Sicher folgte er Philo, Origenes und vor allem seinem Bruder Basilius¹⁸⁸. In letzter Zeit betont man auch seine Abhängigkeit gegenüber der Exegese des Marcell von Ancyra, wie etwa im Fall von 1Kor 15¹⁸⁹. Gerade diese Tatsache kann nur bestätigen, wie breit die exegetische Überlieferung war, in welcher er und die anderen Theologen seiner Zeit sich bewegten.

Für eine gesamthafte Würdigung der Theologie, welche hinter der Sorge Gregors um die Orthodoxie und seinen Bemühungen um die kirchliche Einheit stand, genügt es nicht, ihren rhetorischen, philosophischen und exegetischen Kontext in Erwägung zu ziehen. Man muß sich auch vor Augen halten, welchen Platz Gregor in der Geschichte der Frömmigkeit einnahm¹⁹⁰. Dies stellt einen allerdings vor nicht geringe Schwierigkeiten. In dieser Hinsicht ist es besonders delikats, sich ein genaues Bild über die letzten Lebensjahre Gregors zu machen¹⁹¹. Wie weit es berechtigt ist, für diese Zeit ein vermehrtes Interesse für monastische Fragen anzunehmen, ist eine offene Frage¹⁹². Noch mehr bleiben gewisse Fragen der Chronologie und der Echtheit von Texten, wie besonders der Schrift *De instituto christiano* weiterhin umstritten¹⁹³. Das ist indes hier nicht wichtig. Zwei Dinge sind immerhin für die Zeit vor 380 offensichtlich. Einmal hatte Basilius die theologische Grundlegung des monastischen Lebens und

187 Vgl. D. Liebs, „Die juristische Literatur“, in: M. Fuhrmann (Hrsg.), *Römische Literatur*, Frankfurt 1974, 200–203; M. Simonetti, *Lettera e/o Allegoria. Un contributo alla storia dell'esegesi patristica*, 13 f.

188 Vgl. I. Gargano, *La teoria di Gregorio di Nissa sul cantico dei Cantici*, 45–94.

189 Vgl. E. Hübner, „Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra“, 210–229, bes. zur Exegese von 1Kor 15,28 und Phil 2,9 f.

190 Vgl. M. Canévet, „Grégoire de Nysse“, *DSpir* 6 (1967) 971–1011; Id., „Exégèse et théologie dans les traités spirituels de Grégoire de Nysse“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse: Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 144–168.

191 Vgl. G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 61–65.

192 Vgl. J. Daniélou, „Saint Grégoire de Nysse dans l'histoire du monachisme“, in: *Théologie de la vie monastique: études sur la tradition patristique*, Études publiées sous la direction de la faculté de théologie s. J. de Lyon-Fourvière, Paris 1961, 131–141, bes. 135 ff. Dazu G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 62 f.

193 Vgl. G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, 62, nt. 2, sowie *CPG* II, n. 3162.

die praktische Gestaltung seiner klösterlichen Gemeinschaften bereits abgeschlossen¹⁹⁴. Zum anderen bezeugt das Frühwerk *De virginitate*, daß Gregor selbst sich ideell der monastischen Bewegung seines Bruders bereits angeschlossen hatte¹⁹⁵. Im übrigen erweist sich gerade in diesem Lob auf das asketische Leben, wie sehr Basilius für Gregor Vorbild der christlichen Vollkommenheit war. Das hinderte ihn freilich nicht, in deren philosophischen Begründung über ihn hinauszugehen¹⁹⁶.

Die Wichtigkeit dieser beiden Tatsachen für den frömmigkeitsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund des 1. Buches *Contra Eunomium* läßt sich noch besser abwägen, wenn man auch folgendes bedenkt. Basilius hatte ein klösterliches Leben entworfen, das auf die kirchliche Gemeinschaft hin offen war¹⁹⁷. Umgekehrt hatte er gesucht, das alltägliche Leben selbst seiner Gemeinde nach monastischen Idealen zu organisieren, wenn auch ohne durchschlagenden Erfolg. Von da aus gesehen, konnte die monastische Auffassung vom christlichen Leben auch für die Verteidigung der Orthodoxie nicht gleichgültig sein. Der *intellectus fidei*, um den es im Grunde ging, konnte im Sinn des Mönchtums, der wahren Philosophie, nur als größere Angleichung an Christus verstanden werden¹⁹⁸. Dabei kam der Ostererfahrung eine ganz besondere Wichtigkeit zu¹⁹⁹. Dieser Zusammenhang von Glaubensverständnis und christlicher Vollkommenheit ist umso eher anzunehmen, als schon die vorausgehende origenische Tradition die Theologie in diesem Sinn begriffen hatte²⁰⁰.

In dieser Perspektive wurde verschiedentlich auf den Zusammenhang zwischen der Pneumatologie und den monastischen Idealen der zweiten Hälfte des vierten Jahrhunderts hingewiesen²⁰¹. Ohne Zweifel beschränkte sich Basilius in seiner Lehre von der Gottheit des Heiligen Geistes nicht einfach auf eine

194 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 302 f.

195 Vgl. M. Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la Virginité*, SC 119, Paris 1966, 81 f.

196 Vgl. G. May, „Einige Bemerkungen über das Verhältnis Gregors von Nyssa zu Basilius dem Großen“, 511.

197 Vgl. zum folgenden W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 302, und bes. P.J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, Toronto 1979.

198 Vgl. H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 877–883, bes. 880.

199 Vgl. R.L. Wilken, „Liturgy, Bible and Theology in the Easter Homilies of Gregory of Nyssa“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse: Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 127–143, bes. 129 f.

200 Vgl. R. Staats, „Gregor von Nyssa und das Bischofsamt“, *ZKG* 84 (1973) 149–173, bes. 162 und 164 f.

201 Vgl. bes. H. Dörrie, *De Spiritu Sancto. Der Beitrag des Basilius zum Abschluß des trinitarischen Dogmas*, Göttingen 1956; und H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 876 f.

Begründung aus der Heiligen Schrift. Er bemühte sich vielmehr, seine Pneumatologie und damit seine Trinitätstheologie vom Taufglauben her zu entfalten, wie er bei der Taufe selbst erfahren wird²⁰². Es scheint jedoch, daß manche den Einfluß des Mönchtums auf seine Theologie des Heiligen Geistes überschätzt haben²⁰³. Jedenfalls genügt es nicht, sich dafür auf die gemeinsame Überlieferung der Schrift *De fide* und der späteren Redaktion der *Moralia* zu stützen²⁰⁴. Wenn Basilius in seiner Pneumatologie die geistliche Erfahrung miteinbezog, hielt er sich mehr an den Sinn aller Gläubigen als an das Gebetsleben der Asketen²⁰⁵. Mehr als dem Enthusiasmus gewisser monastischer Kreise wird man darum der inneren Dynamik des in Nizäa erst zum Teil dogmatisch definierten Taufglaubens den entscheidenden Anstoß zu dessen pneumatologischen und triadologischen Vollendung zuschreiben²⁰⁶.

Abschließend läßt sich also der kirchen- und theologiegeschichtliche Hintergrund des ersten Buches *Contra Eunomium* des Gregor von Nyssa wie folgt umschreiben. Als er diese Schrift 380 verfaßte, stand Gregor in der Kirchengemeinschaft des Meletius von Antiochien, welche vor allem durch die Bemühungen seines Bruders zustande gekommen war und nunmehr auch von Kaiser Theodosius bevorzugt wurde. Damit war in erster Linie seine Gegnerschaft gegen Eunomius und die Anhomöer gegeben. Hingegen war Gregor gegenüber anderen kirchlichen Gruppierungen, wie den Marcellianern und den Apollinaristen weniger ausschließlich eingestellt als sein Bruder. In der Begründung seiner Orthodoxie hielt er sich wie dieser an die nizänische Grundthese der klaren

202 Vgl. Basilius, *De Spiritu Sancto* x 25 f.; XIV 31; XV 35; XXIX 75 (SC 17bis, 334–338; 354–358; 364–370; 514–518), und schon CE II 22 (SC 305, 88–92). Dazu P. Luislampe, *Spiritus vivificans. Grundzüge einer Theologie des Heiligen Geistes nach Basilius von Caesarea*, Münster 1981, 122–127.

203 Vgl. A.M. Ritter, „Il secondo concilio ecumenico e la sua ricezione: stato della ricerca“, *Cristianesimo nella storia* 2 (1981) 358, nt. 50; und vor allem G. Kretschmar, „Die Theologie der Kappadokier und die asketischen Bewegungen in Kleinasien im 4. Jahrhundert“, 102 f.

204 Vgl. W.D. Hauschild, „Basilius von Cäsarea“, *TRE* 5 (1980) 304.

205 Vgl. G. Kretschmar, „Die Theologie der Kappadokier und die asketischen Bewegungen in Kleinasien im 4. Jahrhundert“, 125 f.

206 Zur Bedeutung des Taufglaubens bei Basilius und Gregor von Nyssa vgl. G. May, „Einige Bemerkungen über das Verhältnis Gregors von Nyssa zu Basilio dem Großen“, 514 f.; E. Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani*, 101 f.; und bes. M. van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres Contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse: textes scripturaires controversés et élaboration théologique“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse: Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 169–193, bes. 186–192; Exegese von Mt 28,19; und T.A. Kopecek, *History of Neo-Arianism*, 433; Bedeutung der Taufliturgie für die arianische Kontroverse.

Unterscheidung von Trinität und Geschöpfen. Obwohl er den Geist natürlich nicht als einen zweiten Sohn betrachtete, vertrat er seine Ungeschöpflichkeit, ohne deswegen hinsichtlich seines Ursprunges auf das *durch den Sohn* zu verzichten. Wie bei Basilius ist die theologische Methode, mit welcher er seine Orthodoxie verteidigt und seinen Glauben vertieft, vor allem von der Rhetorik, oder besser, von der damals vorwiegend literarischen Bildung her zu verstehen. Gregor griff nicht einfach auf die Kunst der Redner zurück, weil er wie schon zuvor Basilius einen „Technologen“ zu bekämpfen hatte. Seine ganze Geisteshaltung war vielmehr in der Rhetorik verwurzelt, die er selbst eine Zeit lang berufsmäßig gelehrt hatte. Nur von da aus kann man seine Unterscheidung von rationalen und exegetischen Beweisführungen richtig werten. Natürlich muß man seine philosophischen Kategorien und Schemata von seinen philosophischen Quellen her zu erklären suchen. Dabei wird man jedoch nicht allzu leicht eine direkte Abhängigkeit von zeitgenössischen Philosophen, wie etwa Iamblichus, annehmen. Ebenso wird man die philosophische Orientierung der biblischen Begründungen des rechten Glaubens nicht übersehen. Allerdings muß man sie noch mehr in den Rahmen der Exegesegegeschichte hineinstellen, wie sie sich von den Apologeten und Gnostikern angefangen über Origenes bis ins vierte Jahrhundert hinein entwickelt hat. Noch wichtiger als die genaue Kenntnis der philosophischen und exegetischen Quellen ist jedoch für die Bewertung seiner ganzen theologischen Methode das Gewicht, das Gregor selbst aufgrund seiner Auffassung eines wissenschaftlichen *Logos*, einer nach allen Regeln der rhetorischen Kunst verfaßten Rede über eine *quaestio infinita*, seinen Argumenten geben wollte. Schließlich hat man es bei Gregor wie bei seinem Bruder Basilius und seinem Kollegen von Nazianz immer mit einer Theologie zu tun, die letztlich auf die Suche nach der christlichen Vollkommenheit angelegt ist. Selbst wenn in dieser Theologie esoterische Züge nicht fehlen, ist sie dennoch auf eine *koinonia* mit Gott hingeordnet, welche in der kirchlichen *koinonia* des gemeinsamen Glaubens und der gegenseitigen Liebe begründet ist, wie sie vor allem von Basilius hochgehalten worden ist.

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L'influence d'Aèce sur Eunome est-elle repérable dans le *Contre Eunome* I de Grégoire de Nysse ?

Raymond Winling

Dans son *Contre Eunome* I, Basile déclare: «Il est clair qu'à travers le disciple achevé, le maître (Aèce) aussi sera convaincu d'erreur, puisque c'est lui qui a jeté les semences de l'impiété.»¹ Grégoire de Nysse, de son côté, présente Aèce comme le «maître» d'Eunome² et dit de ce dernier qu'«il se mit à admirer Aèce seul parmi tous»³. Mais, s'il livre des renseignements assez détaillés sur la carrière aventureuse d'Aèce et sur son mode de vie⁴, il ne fournit guère d'indications précises sur la doctrine d'Aèce. Ces deux séries de données sont de nature à soulever la question qui est de savoir si, dans le *Contre Eunome* I de Grégoire de Nysse, il est possible de repérer des indices de l'influence d'Aèce sur Eunome dans le domaine de la doctrine professée. Plusieurs pistes pourraient être explorées: nous le ferons à partir des idées-force d'Eunome.

I L'«être-ingendré» (to agennèton – agennèsia) censé désigner la substance de Dieu

L'argumentation d'Eunome se noue autour du terme «agennètos» qui, d'après lui, exprime la substance même de Dieu. Dans *l'Apologie*, il dit de Dieu qu'il «est lui-même substance inengendrée.»⁵ En dépit de la mise au point faite par Basile, il maintient fermement sa position dans *l'Apologie de l'apologie*. Or, c'est de son maître qu'il a repris cette idée formulée de différentes manières par celui-ci. Aèce parle tantôt de «Dieu inengendré» (*Syntagmation* 1,2,9,31,37), tantôt de «Dieu inengendré par nature» (*Syntag* 4), parfois de «nature inengendrée» (*Syntag* 11,27,32); il emploie aussi «to agennèton» (*Syntag* 32) et

1 Basile, *Contre Eunome* (SC 299, 146).

2 CE I 36 (SC 521, 140).

3 CE I 51 (SC 521, 150).

4 CE 136–147 (SC 521, 140–148).

5 Eunome, *Apologie* 7; 8 (SC 305, 246; 250). Le texte grec figure aussi dans R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius, The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 34–75.

« agennèsia » (*Syntag* 32)⁶ au sens de l'« être-inengendré » ou du « fait d'être inengendré ».

Eunome fait sienne l'équivalence posée par Àèce entre la substance de Dieu et l'être-inengendré, et Grégoire de Nysse ne cesse de lui reprocher de raisonner à partir de ce principe explicatif, en rappelant avec insistance que l'être-inengendré est une propriété de la substance divine, mais non la substance même. Ainsi il déclare : « Ils (Eunome et ses sectateurs) disent que l'être-inengendré est substance »⁷. Dans le *CE* II figure un passage qui résume un raisonnement relatif à la simplicité de Dieu et aboutissant à la conclusion : « Ils déclarent que Dieu est nommé inengendré, que la divinité est simple par nature. [...] Si donc Dieu est non composé selon sa nature, lui qui porte le nom d'inengendré, le nom de sa nature même sera l'inengendré et sa nature ne sera rien d'autre que l'« être-inengendré »⁸.

II Le terme « agennètos » est-il dû à la pensée conceptuelle humaine ?

Àèce refuse d'admettre que le terme agennètos ait été élaboré par la pensée conceptuelle humaine (épinoia) : « Si l'être-inengendré n'exprime pas la substance de Dieu, mais si le nom incomparable est le fait de la pensée conceptuelle humaine, Dieu se reconnaît redevable à ceux qui ont conçu ce terme en raison de l'invention de l'« être-inengendré » (*Syntag* 12). Eunome a retenu l'argument, mais il apporte des compléments qui vont dans le sens de la précision : « Quand nous disons inengendré, ce n'est pas de nom seulement selon un concept humain que nous pensons devoir honorer Dieu : nous pensons acquitter en vérité la dette la plus imprescriptible de toutes celles que nous devons à Dieu, en confessant ce qu'il est. Car ce qui est dit conceptuellement a une existence purement nominale, dans l'acte de son énonciation, puis s'évanouit naturellement avec les sons de la voix. Mais Dieu, que les êtres se taisent ou qu'ils parlent, qu'ils soient déjà venus à l'existence ou qu'ils n'y soient pas venus, était et est inengendré »⁹. La précision apportée éclaire aussi le texte d'Àèce, dans la mesure où « épinoia » est censé avoir un sens purement péjoratif et que ce qui est dit selon le « concept » n'a pas de consistance et relève

6 Entre parenthèses, nous indiquons les numéros qui correspondent au texte grec établi par L.R. Wickham, "The Syntagma of Aetius the Anomean", *JThS* 19 (1968) 541-544.

7 *CE* I 512 (SC 524, 244).

8 *CE* II 23 (SC 551, 116).

9 Eunome, *Apologie* 8 (SC 305, 246-248).

de l'imagination qui crée des fictions. Alors que le *CE I* de Grégoire de Nysse ne comporte aucun extrait de *l'Apologie de l'apologie* ayant directement trait à ce thème, le *CE II*, par contre, offre une citation importante qui prouve, d'une part, qu'Eunome a partiellement tenu compte des remarques de Basile à ce sujet¹⁰, mais que, d'autre part, il maintient pour l'essentiel ses positions. Voici ce passage : « Des choses dites selon le concept, les unes n'ont d'existence que dans l'énonciation comme n'ayant pas de sens, les autres ont une signification spécifique. De ces dernières, les unes sont dites par accroissement, comme c'est le cas pour les colosses, les autres par diminution, comme c'est le cas pour les pygmées, d'autres par addition, comme c'est le cas pour les polycéphales, d'autres encore par composition, comme c'est le cas pour les monstres hybrides »¹¹. Même en faisant la concession de ce qui est mentionné dans la dernière phrase, Eunome retient une connotation péjorative d'« épinoia » : cette forme de pensée est, selon lui, à l'origine de fictions et d'êtres irréels et ne saurait en aucun cas rendre compte de ce qui est conforme à la réalité que représente l'agennêtos.

A propos de ce thème, Eunome reprend un autre élément d'argumentation provenant d'Aèce et concernant le devoir de rendre à Dieu l'hommage qui lui est dû. Alors qu'Aèce s'exprime à ce sujet sous forme d'allusion (*Syntag* 12,14,16,37), Eunome le fait dans un langage clair : « Il (Basile) magnifie avec des mots provenant de concepts la vie bienheureuse de Dieu, qui est magnifiée en elle-même et à elle seule, même avant la naissance de ceux qui façonnent ces concepts »¹².

Ce qui vient d'être dit au sujet des thèses d'Aèce et d'Eunome soulève une question de fond : si le terme agennêtos n'est pas dû à la pensée conceptuelle humaine, quelle est donc son origine ? Eunome apporte sa réponse dans *l'Apologie de l'apologie* : selon lui, ce terme est d'origine divine, comme d'ailleurs tous les noms utilisés par les hommes pour désigner des choses existant réellement. Ainsi il déclare : « Dieu a assigné à chacune des choses qui existent une dénomination propre, adaptée à sa nature »¹³. Il va jusqu'à dire que ces noms sont antérieurs à la création de l'homme : « L'appellation des choses données (par Dieu) est antérieure à la naissance de ceux qui en font usage »¹⁴. En dernier recours, il s'agit pour Eunome de justifier la thèse selon

10 Basile, *Contre Eunome* 1 5–8 (SC 299, 180–198).

11 *CE II* 179 (SC 551, 221).

12 *CE II* 153 (SC 551, 204).

13 *CE II* 403 (SC 551, 368).

14 *CE II* 262 (SC 551, 278).

laquelle le terme « agennètòs », désignant la substance du Dieu suprême, est un terme d'origine divine. Les hommes connaissent ce terme, tout comme les autres termes créés par Dieu, parce que « Dieu a semé ces noms dans nos âmes »¹⁵.

III La différence entre la substance de l'Inengendré et la substance de l'Engendré

Àèce entend réfuter les homoousiens et les homéousiens: « Si Dieu, dit-il, demeure sans fin dans la nature inengendrée et si le rejeton est rejeton sans fin, la doctrine perverse de l'« homoousion » et de l'« homoiouision » sera ruinée » (*Syntag* 4) et « Si le Dieu tout-puissant qui est de nature inengendrée ne se connaît pas lui-même comme étant de nature engendrée, et si le Fils, de son côté, qui est de nature engendrée, se connaît lui-même comme étant ce qu'il est, comment l'« homoousion » ne serait-il pas trompeur, si l'un se connaît comme étant inengendré et l'autre, comme étant engendré » (*Syntag* 11). Auparavant Àèce avait affirmé successivement que l'Inengendré est « sans cause » (*Syntag* 2), que, pour ce qui est de la nature, l'Inengendré doit être distingué de l'Engendré (*Syntag* 4), que l'Engendré ne dérive pas de la substance de l'Inengendré par voie de séparation, mais est le résultat d'un acte de puissance de la part de l'Inengendré (*Syntag* 5,7; voir aussi *ibid.* 16,17).

Eunome reprend ce genre d'argumentation dans l'*Apologie* dans laquelle il déclare: « Etant inengendré selon la démonstration qui précède, Dieu ne saurait jamais souffrir de génération au point de faire partager sa propre nature à l'engendré, et il échappera à toute comparaison et à toute communauté avec l'engendré. Car si l'on voulait mettre cette substance en commun avec autre chose ou la communiquer à autre chose, on le ferait par division et par séparation ... »¹⁶. De même dans l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, il raisonne en fonction de la thèse d'Àèce. C'est ainsi qu'il cherche à montrer l'incohérence de Basile et de ceux qui défendent l'« homoousion », en déclarant: « Vous vous exposez à vos propres reproches – en effet vous accrédez le bruit que celui que vous imaginez comme inengendré tire son origine par naissance de l'autre ou bien, en confessant une seule et unique substance sans commencement, puis, en le déterminant ensuite comme Père et Fils par la génération, vous affirmerez que

¹⁵ CE II 548 (SC 551, 462).

¹⁶ Eunome, *Apologie* 9 (SC 305, 250).

la substance inengendrée est née elle-même par elle-même »¹⁷. D'autre part, à partir des prémisses posées par Aèce, il propose une définition de la Triade, qui repose sur une distinction très nette entre les Trois de cette Triade, la différence d'ordre ontologique se situant au niveau de la substance : « Tout l'exposé de notre doctrine acquiert sa pleine portée à partir de la substance la plus élevée et la plus authentique, et à partir de celle qui, tenant son existence de la première, devance après celle-ci toutes les autres substances, et de la troisième, qui n'est égale en rang à aucune des deux autres, mais est subordonnée à la première en raison de la causalité, et à la deuxième en raison de l'énergie selon laquelle elle est devenue ... Chacune de ces substances est, selon sa dignité propre, radicalement simple et absolument une ... »¹⁸. Tout en s'inspirant des thèses d'Aèce, Eunome se montre original, en ce sens qu'il évite les termes Père et Fils, au nom de la conviction que le Fils n'est pas vraiment Fils par voie de génération. Par ailleurs, alors qu'Aèce parle de l'Inengendré et de l'Engendré, Eunome mentionne un troisième membre de la Triade, mais fait comprendre que celui-ci tire son origine de la « deuxième substance » à la suite d'une « énergie » de celle-ci, c'est-à-dire en tant que créature de celle-ci. Grégoire de Nysse s'efforcera, dans une longue réfutation, de défendre l'unité de substance au sein de la Trinité, d'expliquer que la différence se situe au niveau des Personnes et d'établir l'égalité entre les Trois.

IV Agennètos est-il un terme privatif?

Aèce s'explique sur le sens à donner au terme agennètos en précisant que ce terme n'exprime pas la privation (sterèsis) : « Si l'être-inengendré est privation, et la privation perte de condition, et si la perte détruit (la condition) ou bien (la) change en quelque chose d'autre, comment une condition qui change ou est détruite peut-elle être appelée substance de Dieu sous la dénomination « 'être-inengendré' » ? (*Syntag* 24). Dans l'*Apologie*, Eunome invoque le même argument : à propos de l'être-inengendré » il dit : « En vérité, ce n'est pas non plus selon la privation, s'il est vrai que les privations sont privations d'attributs naturels et qu'elles sont secondes par rapport aux possessions. [...] Dieu n'est pas devenu inengendré pour avoir d'abord eu cette origine et en avoir été ensuite privé. Il est tout à fait impie [...] de dire tout uniment que Dieu a été privé de quelque chose, c'est-à-dire de l'un des éléments qui étaient naturel-

¹⁷ CE I 477 (SC 524, 222).

¹⁸ CE I 151-152 (SC 524, 10).

lement présents en lui »¹⁹. Dans l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, Eunome s'est attaché à défendre cette interprétation en réponse aux critiques de Basile, formulées dans le *Contre Eunome*²⁰. Un assez long développement est consacré à cette question. Tout d'abord est formulé un jugement d'allure générale: «Quand certains affirment que Dieu est inengendré en raison de la privation de la génération, nous déclarons, pour notre part, en guise de réfutation, que ni ce mot ni cette notion ne sont d'aucune manière appropriés à Dieu»²¹. Dans la suite, Eunome explique qu'il convient de distinguer entre «sterésis-privation» et «aphairesis-négation»²². Grégoire de Nysse affirme qu'il se refuse à aborder une discussion d'ordre «technologique» au sujet de la pertinence de ces termes et il définit le sens que Basile et lui-même entendent donner aux mots qui commencent par l'alpha privatif. Dans le cas de Dieu, ces noms servent, non pas à faire connaître la substance de Dieu, mais à dire ce que la substance divine ne comporte pas, ce que Dieu n'est pas: par exemple, si on dit de lui qu'il est incorruptible, on veut exprimer par là l'idée que la mort ne saurait l'atteindre²³.

v Le nom révèle la substance

L'insistance sur le terme agennètos censé définir la substance de Dieu soulève la question de la fonction déictique ou révélatrice de ce terme. Selon Àèce, ce terme a moins une fonction déictique de simple désignation qu'une fonction révélatrice²⁴: il «fait comprendre», il est «dèlôtikos»: «Si l'«être-inengendré» fait comprendre la substance de Dieu ...», dit-il par exemple (*Syntax* 16). A ce sujet, Basile apporte le renseignement suivant: Ils ont pour eux un vieux sophisme formulé par Àèce, le chef de cette secte, qui a dit quelque part dans une de ses lettres: «Les êtres de nature dissemblable, on en parle de façon dissemblable; et, inversement, 'les êtres dont on parle de façon dissemblable sont de nature dissemblable'. Et pour appuyer ce dire, il tirait à lui la parole de l'apôtre: 'Un seul Dieu le Père, de qui tout vient; et un seul Seigneur, Jésus Christ, par qui tout existe'. En conséquence, dans le même rapport où se trouvent les mots entre eux, se trouveront aussi les natures signifiées par les

19 Eunome, *Apologie* 8 (SC 305, 248).

20 Basile, *Contre Eunome* 19 (SC 299, 198-200).

21 CE II 565 (SC 551, 474).

22 CE II 580; 591; 600-604 (SC 551, 484; 492; 498).

23 CE II 600-604 (SC 551, 498-500).

24 Eunome, *Apologie* 8 (SC 305, 250).

mots. Or, il y a dissemblance de *par qui* à *de qui*. C'est donc que le Fils est dissemblable du Père »²⁵. Ailleurs, Aèce a formulé cette idée de façon plus lapidaire : en définitive, dit-il, « l'Inengendré est ce qu'il est dit (être) (tout'estin ho legetai) » (*Syntagmā*). Eunome reprend cette thèse dans l'*Apologie* : « Si donc l'Inengendré n'est tel ni selon le concept ni selon la privation, [...] reste alors qu'il serait en soi substance inengendrée ». Dans l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, il continue de raisonner en fonction de la thèse d'Aèce, tant et si bien que Grégoire de Nysse est amené à plusieurs reprises à insister sur l'origine du terme agennētos, fruit de la pensée conceptuelle humaine et sur le fait que ce terme n'exprime pas la substance de Dieu, mais indique ce que Dieu n'est pas²⁶.

VI Le terme anoméen est-il vraiment justifié pour désigner le courant dirigé par Aèce et Eunome ?

D'Aèce Grégoire de Nysse dit : « Il passa pour un esprit sagace et capable de percevoir les aspects cachés, du fait qu'il exposait que ce qui est créé et ce qui est issu du néant est dissemblable de celui qui l'a créé et l'a fait sortir du néant »²⁷. Cette déclaration fait écho à celle de Basile selon laquelle Aèce est « le premier qui a osé dire clairement que le Fils Monogène est dissemblable de Dieu le Père selon la substance »²⁸. Quant à Eunome, Grégoire lui reproche d'enseigner la *dissemblance* entre le Père et le Fils, ainsi il déclare : « A la thèse, selon laquelle [...] le créateur et ordonnateur de l'univers (le Fils) est traité de création et d'oeuvre produite, ils joignent une autre thèse, à savoir que le Fils est différent (allotrios) selon la nature et dissemblable (anhomoios) selon la substance et qu'il ne participe aucunement des propriétés de la nature du Père »²⁹. Par ailleurs, Grégoire utilise, dans le *CE I*, le terme « anoméens » ou l'expression « ceux qui enseignent la dissemblance » pour désigner Eunome et ses sectateurs³⁰.

Or, dans les textes d'Aèce et d'Eunome qui nous sont parvenus, le terme « dissemblable » n'est pas attesté. Dès lors, il faut se demander si l'accusation d'anoméisme de la part de Basile et de Grégoire de Nysse n'est pas dénuée de

25 Basile, *Sur le Saint-Esprit* 2,4 (SC 17bis, 260).

26 Nous renvoyons à ce qui a été dit plus haut dans § 1 et § 2.

27 *CE I* 46 (SC 521, 146).

28 Basile, *Contre Eunome* I (SC 299, 144).

29 *CE I* 222 (SC 524, 56). Voir aussi *CE I* 229; 234; 401; 403; 412; 439; 450; 467; 484; 505; 547; 616; 617.

30 *CE I* 45; 220; 484; 547 (SC 521, 144; SC 524, 54; 226; 268).

fondement et ne correspond pas plutôt à un effet de rhétorique, relevant de la surenchère et destiné à charger l'adversaire. Certains érudits font même valoir qu'Eunome emploie le terme « semblable », quand il parle des rapports entre le Père et le Fils. B. Studer signale que R.P.C. Hanson, se référant à Philostorge, considère Eunome comme « homéen »³¹. E. Cavalcanti, par contre, note que, si dans l'*Apologie* d'Eunome le terme « dissemblable » est pratiquement absent, c'est que l'auteur dissimule une pensée anoméenne sous le couvert d'un langage homéen³²; B. Sesboüé se rallie à cette interprétation³³.

Essayons de tirer au clair la question soulevée. Pour éviter des conclusions abusives tirées de l'emploi ou du non-emploi d'« anhomiois » ou d'« anoméens », il convient de prendre en compte la judicieuse remarque de R.P. Vaggione: selon lui, les dénominations « homoousiens, homéousiens, homéens, anoméens » servent à désigner les membres de groupes auxquels on s'oppose, les groupes respectifs se considérant chacun comme orthodoxes³⁴. Ce n'est donc pas uniquement le nombre des occurrences de certains termes, mais l'ensemble des idées-forces de l'argumentation qui fournit les éléments décisifs pour l'argumentation. La prise en compte de ce principe gnoséologique permettra de résoudre quelques questions que l'on est amené à se poser au sujet du thème de la dissemblance, auquel font appel les néo-ariens. La question soulevée mérite un examen d'autant plus détaillé qu'une autre question y est liée, à savoir celle de l'évolution du champ sémantique de « agennètos » et du sens spécifique qu'Àèce et Eunome donnent à ce terme-clé. Nous mettrons en oeuvre une approche d'abord historique, ensuite philologique, enfin théologique.

Historiquement, il faut tenir compte de l'évolution, au sein du parti des homéens, de l'attitude adoptée à l'égard des néo-ariens. Il s'agit d'une attitude qui a connu des variations assez radicales. De cette évolution mouvementée nous retenons les moments suivants. Comme Àèce défendait des thèses qui s'opposaient non seulement à celles des homoousiens et des homéousiens, mais aussi à celle des homéens, et que, d'autre part, il était suspect du point de vue politique, il fut exilé à Pepuza, en 358, par Constance, excédé par son esprit

31 B. Studer se réfère à R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God the Arian Controversy*, Edinburgh 1988, 613 et 627, cf. B. Studer, "Der Theologiegeschichtliche Hintergrund der Epinoiai-Lehre Gregors von Nyssa", in: L. Karfikova – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium 11. An English Version with Supporting Studies*, Leiden 2007, 23, n. 12.

32 E. Cavalcanti, *Studi eunomiani*, Roma 1976, 24.

33 B. Sesboüé, *Basile. Contre Eunome, Introduction* (sc 299), Paris 1982, 26–28.

34 R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 155 note 31.

de dissimulation, et excommunié lors du synode de Constantinople en 360. C'est pendant cette période qu'il rédigea le *Syntagmation*. Lors de l'avènement de Julien en 361, il rentra en grâce, mais se retira dans un domaine que lui avait offert l'empereur. Après la mort de Julien, le parti des homéens rompit d'abord avec lui et ensuite avec Eunome pour des raisons doctrinales et institutionnelles, notamment parce qu'Aèce et Eunome avaient entrepris de fonder des communautés ecclésiales qu'ils entendaient diriger eux-mêmes³⁵. Cette donnée est révélatrice en ce qui concerne notre propos, car elle prouve que la parti des néo-ariens était finalement considéré par les autres, homéens compris, comme leur étant étranger.

Une deuxième approche, relevant plutôt de l'enquête philologique, concerne l'emploi fait par Aèce et Eunome de «anhomoios» ou de termes synonymes. Dans le *Syntagmation*, Aèce a évité «anhomoios», mais il a employé l'adjectif composé «anhomoioimerès» au sens, de «composé de parties dissemblables» (non homogènes), pour souligner le caractère blasphématoire que, d'après lui, revêt la doctrine de homoousiens (*Syntag*, 10). Comme on l'a vu un peu plus haut, on peut admettre, avec certains érudits, que c'est pas prudence qu'il se montre très réservé dans l'utilisation de l'adjectif «anhomoios». Eunome, de son côté, s'abstient d'employer le terme «anhomoios»; bien plus, il a recours au terme «homoios-semblable», pour parler de certains rapports entre le Père et le Fils. Mais, pour lui, il s'agit d'une ressemblance concernant non pas la substance divine, mais l'activité divine. A propos du thème du Fils image du Père, il dit: «L'image ne pourrait rapporter la similitude à la substance, mais à l'activité qui est contenue de manière inengendrée dans la prescience de Dieu [...] Nous l'appelons donc image, non que nous comparions le rejeton à l'inengendré, – car pas de proportion et pas de possibilité pour quiconque –, mais en comparant le Fils Monogène et premier-né au Père, puisque l'appellation de Fils montre sa substance et celle de Père l'activité de celui qui l'a engendré»³⁶. Cette citation fait d'ailleurs comprendre que l'on n'est pas réduit à l'examen d'un seul terme pour trouver la réponse à la question soulevée; en effet, des expressions synonymes peuvent servir à exprimer la même idée de dissemblance. Ainsi, dans le passage cité, Eunome précise que «l'image ne pourrait rapporter la ressemblance à la substance», ce qui signifie en clair qu'il ne saurait être question de ressemblance entre la substance de l'Inengendré et celle de l'Engendré et que donc il y a dissemblance entre les deux. La même remarque vaut pour Aèce. Dans le *Syntagmation* il parle de

35 Philostorge, *HE* VIII 2; 4; 7 (CGS 105–107).

36 Eunome, *Apologie* 24 (SC 305, 282).

«l'impossibilité de la ressemblance exacte entre la nature qui confère la subsistence et celle à laquelle est accordée la subsistence» (*Syntag*, 3), ou encore du «caractère incomparable des substances, quand chacune des natures reste sans cesse dans la dignité propre à sa nature» (*Syntag* 4). Dans chacune de ces formulations s'exprime l'idée de la radicale différence entre la substance du Père et celle du Fils.

Relève aussi de ce genre d'approche l'enquête sur le sens précis donné par Àèce et Eunome au terme «agennètos». Certes, dans la contribution «Das Vokabular des Eunomius im Kontext Gregors» de F. Mann, qui figure dans le présent volume, il est question de l'emploi de «agennèsia-agennètos», mais l'accent est plutôt mis sur le sens que leur donne Grégoire de Nysse; le propos de notre contribution est de livrer de rapides observations sur le sens que donnent à ces termes Àèce et Eunome en fonction de l'idée de dissemblance.

Bien sûr, «agennètos» signifie «non dérivé» «non créé ou non produit» «sans cause». Mais Àèce et d'Eunome insistent sur les points suivants: selon eux, «agennètos» est l'unique terme qui rende compte de cet aspect; ce terme désigne la substance même de Dieu; il n'existe aucune relation de similitude entre l'«agennètos» et le «gennètos» sous le rapport de la substance. Tout cela relève d'un principe métaphysique d'après lequel les êtres ne dérivent pas par participation d'un être suprême: vu sous cet aspect, l'«agennètos» est à considérer comme l'Absolu³⁷. La différence entre l'«agennètos» et les êtres créés correspond à celle qui existe entre l'absolu et le contingent. Or le Fils ou l'Engendré est conçu de façon très claire comme étant la première et la plus éminente créature: il est le résultat d'un acte créateur et, à ce titre, il n'a aucune ressemblance avec l'«agennètos» selon la substance³⁸.

Pour ce qui est d'une approche plus théologique, nous ne pouvons que renvoyer à ce qui a été dit plus haut au sujet des thèses d'Eunome sur les points suivants: l'«être-inengendré» est censé désigner la substance de Dieu; il existe une différence entre la substance de l'Inengendré et la substance de l'Engendré; «agennètos» n'est pas un terme privatif; le nom révèle la substance. On pourrait ajouter que Basile et Grégoire de Nysse considéraient les termes «Père» et «Fils» comme des termes relatifs, indiquant une relation réciproque de paternité et de filiation, et qu'ils maniaient cet argument pour réfuter la thèse néo-arienne de la dissemblance radicale entre l'«agennètos» et le «gennètos». Ainsi Basile note que le mot Père «introduit, l'impliquant à

37 Voir G.L. Prestige, *Dieu dans la pensée patristique*, Paris 1955, 60.

38 Voir R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 249–252.

cause de la relation, la notion de Fils »³⁹. Or Eunome avait cité le passage dans lequel figure la notion de relation, en omettant toutefois ce qui, pour Basile, était une précision. Grégoire de Nysse accuse Eunome d'avoir dénaturé complètement la pensée de Basile et ajoute : « Nous confesserons courageusement ce qui est présenté comme absurde par ces gens, à savoir que le mot Père évoque conjointement la notion de Monogène en raison de sa relation avec lui »⁴⁰.

Les trois approches pratiquées justifient donc l'utilisation du terme « anoméens » pour désigner Aèce, Eunome et leurs sectateurs qui entendaient récuser les thèses des homoousiens et des homéousiens et finirent par être rejetés même par les homéens.

Au terme de cette rapide enquête, une constatation s'impose. Dans le *Syntagmation*, Aèce énonce des thèses qui formulent les principes directeurs d'un système doctrinal qui est en rupture délibérée avec celui des nicéens. Eunome a repris les éléments majeurs de l'argumentation d'Aèce, tout en se montrant original. En effet, dans l'*Apologie* et dans l'*Apologie de l'apologie*, il a livré un exposé doctrinal de type systématique, pour lequel il a adopté le plan des confessions de foi à structure ternaire. De plus il s'est imposé un effort d'explication, en vue de justifier le bien-fondé des principes directeurs provenant d'Aèce et d'apporter des éclaircissements sur des aspects simplement indiqués par son maître. Ce que celui-ci formulait de façon lapidaire a été explicité et développé par Eunome, et présenté sous forme de traité plus abordable que les syllogismes du *Syntagmation*.

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39 Basile, *Contre Eunome* 15 (SC 299, 176).

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Gregory of Nyssa's Letters 29 and 30 and the *Contra Eunomium*

Anna M. Silvas

I Transmission of Letters 29 and 30 in the Manuscripts

Traditionally, and very aptly, Gregory of Nyssa's Letter 29 and his brother Peter's reply to it, Letter 30, have appeared as a preface for Book 1 of Gregory's *Contra Eunomium*. Werner Jaeger however did not publish these two letters in his edition of Gregory's *Contra Eunomium*. For this reason alone Georgio Pasquali included them in his new compilation and edition of Gregory's letters.¹

Pasquali studies the transmission of these two letters on pages IX, LVII, LXXIII–LXXV and LXXVII. According to him, these letters are found attached to the *Contra Eunomium* as a preface² at the earliest stage of the manuscript record, late 10th–11th century.³

Letters 29 and 30 are transmitted in the earliest surviving codices in conjunction with the *Contra Eunomium*. The following list of relevant codices uses Pasquali's *sigla*:

1. 'L': L(aurentius) Mediceus plut. VI nr. 17, late 10th–11th century.
2. 'P': P(atensis) 46, 10th–11th centuries. Paul Mass, who in 1912 noted Letter 29 on folio 75^r, but said nothing about Letter 30.⁴
3. 'B': Lesbicus Mytilenensis 6, of the 12th–13th centuries. No indication of folio given by Pasquali.
4. 'S': Vaticanus 1907, 13th century. No indication of folio given by Pasquali.

Of codices containing collections of letters, the oldest and most important witnesses in which Letters 29 and 30 appear are:

1 G. Pasquali, *Gregorii Nysseni Epistulae, editio altera*, GNO VIII/2, Leiden 1959, 87–91.

2 Ibid., IX.

3 Ibid., LXXIX.

4 Cf. Ibid., LXXIV. Pasquali did not have the chance to inspect this codex, but consulted a very similar 16th cent. Ms. Vaticanus 1773 (Z), which shows both letters. Further verification is needed.

1. 'F': F(lorentinus) Laurentianus plut. LXXXVI nr. 13, 13th century, on folios 213^v–216, following Letter 20 and preceding Letter 6.
2. 'V': V(aticanus) 424, 13th century, on folio 55^r and 55^v, following Basil's five books *Contra Eunomium*, and before Gregory's *Antirrheticus adversos Apollinarium*.⁵

In Pasquali's judgment, the common source of F and V, which he designates r, did not contain Letters 29 and 30. The compiler of F, who was concerned to enlarge the available collection of letters, plucked them from a copy of the *Contra Eunomium*; V drew them from a codex of the *Antirrheticus*. Pasquali deduces from the evidence in 'N' (Barberinianus graecus 291) that further back in time there was a fuller collection of Gregory's letters, designated by him 'y', which included the three long Letters 1–3 (later siphoned off into separate transmissions), and the 'minor' Letters 4–28. He holds that a prototype edition of letters was made either by Gregory himself, or by a compiler shortly after his death.

We can conclude, at any rate, that Letters 29 and 30 did not appear in any prototype collection of letters, as such, but were attached to Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* at a very early date. It may be reasonable to suppose that Gregory himself made this editorial decision, or a literary executor in his confidence with access to these letters. None would be better than Peter himself.⁶

II The Setting of the Letters

Letter 29 was written after Gregory had returned from 'Armenia', i.e. once the episode of his detainment in Sebasteia, reported with great pathos, if not desperation, by Gregory in his letter 19, was behind him.⁷ Despite the inscription

5 There is also a detailed description of 'V' in W. Jaeger, *Contra Eunomium Libri, Pars Altera*, GNO II, Leiden 1960, XXIV–XXVII. Jaeger's siglum for this codex is 'T'.

6 It is possible that Peter was the sub-editor under Basil's guidance, or even the *end-redactor* of the 'very ancient' Pontic recension of Basil's *Great Asketikon*, which underpins the so-called 'Vulgate' recension. In 376 Basil spent some time in Annisa, in his sister and brother's monastery, and it is during this period, I suggest, that Peter discussed with Basil the idea of rearranging the many 'Shorter' Rules into thematic groups, an interest entirely germane to a practical monastic leader. See A. Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great*, Oxford 2005, 11–14, especially 13.

7 Cf. W. Jaeger, *Prolegomenorum at libros contra Eunomium*.

in two manuscripts,⁸ no term of address is used in this letter that might be expected towards a bishop, such as Peter himself uses, for example, in the following letter. Accordingly, we can infer that Peter is probably not yet bishop of Sebasteia at the time of this correspondence. His position is still that of priest and monastic superior at Annisa in Pontus. Indeed it is probable that Peter was not appointed Bishop of Sebasteia until after the triumph of the neo-nicenes in the council of Constantinople, in 381, with all its enactments and settlements for the churches of the Eastern empire. Although Peter had been not present at Macrina's death and funeral, and had missed Gregory's visit at that poignant time,⁹ at the beginning of Letter 29 Gregory speaks of Peter's counsel, evidently given before Gregory's release from Sebasteia, that he should edit his notes on Eunomius into a book. In that case we conjecture that Gregory and Peter had the chance to speak with each during the affairs at Ibora¹⁰ (Letter 19.12) and later too, Peter possibly visited him in Sebasteia, and they probably met again after Gregory's emancipation. With all these factors taken into consideration we may date Letter 29 and its reply by Peter, Letter 30 to late 380/early 381.

After Basil's death, probably in late 378,¹¹ Eunomius felt emboldened to write and publish a long-delayed riposte against Basil's *Contra Eunomium*, which he called *Apologia for his Apologia*. Even while in confinement in Sebasteia, Gregory had been investigating Eunomius' new book and taking notes in view of a reply. It is a guess that he finalised a form of his own *Contra Eunomium* I and II, addressing the first part of Eunomius' book, in the confined winter months of 380/381. When he had finished, however, he was somewhat hesitant at the strength of feeling he had expressed in his own invective. Seeking a word of good counsel before venturing to publish, he sends a copy of what he has written to his monastic brother in Annisa, and writes Letter 29 as a sort of covering

8 Only one of Pasquali's codices refer to Peter as bishop of Sebasteia: v, to which Maraval later added B. Two codices, LZ, simply have 'to his brother Peter', and F has simply 'to Peter'.

9 Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* 18,1 (GNO VIII/1 387; SC 178, 192).

10 A half a day's distance from Annisa, on the far side of the River Iris.

11 The date of Basil's election and of his death was under considerable debate in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There were knotty problems concerning the timing of Emperor Valens' recall of the neo-nicene exiles, the chronology of Gregory's Letter 19, the Council of Antioch and the date of Macrina's death. The controversy may be said to have been authoritatively settled by J.-R. Pouchet, in his "La date de l'élection épiscopale de saint Basile et celle de sa mort," *RHE* 87 (1992) 5–33. He proves that Basil must have died in September 378, and that the traditional 1st January date is the result of Gregory's own campaign in his *Encomium* on his brother, to promote that date as Basil's feast-day.

letter, asking Peter to read it and tell him what he thinks. Peter appears to have forwarded Letter 30 fairly promptly in reply.

III Notes on Letter 29

The earlier part of Letter 29 (29,1–6) has the character of a genuine private letter to his brother Peter, in which Gregory uses the first person singular. In the later part (29,7–9) Gregory switches to the plural of modesty, and appears to be more consciously prefacing the *Contra Eunomium* I. Even so, this somewhat unpredictable alternating between first person singular and plural is quite characteristic of Gregory's epistolary style.

It is noteworthy that Gregory writes in a highly cultured, hypotactic style of Greek to Peter, whose education was wholly guided by Macrina. This reflects well on the intellectual calibre and skill in discourse of both Macrina and her protégé Peter, neither of whom had gone through the traditional course of Hellenic *paideia* and rhetorical studies.

The lofty esteem in which Gregory held his sister Macrina casts its glow on the youngest of the siblings, the last born of Emmelia and Basil the elder. Peter had been Macrina's zealous collaborator in the monastic community at Annisa from his childhood and youth. He had always remained faithful to Macrina's and Basil's ascetic ideals, so much so that Basil appears to have ordained him to the presbyterate before the canonical age of 30, for service in Annisa. Through the 370s Peter matured as a priest-monk and master of monastic community life. Basil also held his youngest brother in much esteem, consulted with him during his last visit to Annisa in 376, and clearly had high hopes for his future service in the Church. At the time that Basil won over his brother Gregory from his career as a professional rhetorician for service in the Church (371/2), Gregory visited his illustrious elder sister as a newly minted bishop and gratefully sought her spiritual guidance.¹² No wonder then that after Macrina's death (July 379) Gregory looks to her most faithful disciple for trustworthy spiritual counsel, seeing him as Macrina's and Basil's true heir, at least in respect of the ascetic life. All of this surely says something for Gregory's own humility and sense of

12 She may well have sent a younger sister and virgin of the Annisa community, Theosebia, as a sort of spiritual chaperone for Gregory in his new situation as bishop. The evidence of an ascetic community of virgins in Nyssa can be found in Gregory's Letter 6. On the question of whether Theosebia was his wife or, as in fact she is called, his sister, see the study prefacing Gregory Nazianzen's Letter 197, in A. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, Leiden 2007, 98–100.

realism about himself. In fact, the issue about which he consults Peter is really an ascetic issue: has he, Gregory, been unwise to let himself be carried away by 'passion' in his treatment of Eunomius, and so forsaken that 'moderate manner' taught by their common father?

In these letters both Gregory and Peter speak of Basil as 'our father'. The only one of the siblings who does not appear to have referred to the first-born son, Basil the younger, as 'father', was Macrina. She of course was his elder sister and the first-born of the family. It is Gregory who attests in his *Life of Macrina*, that at one pivotal moment, Macrina acted indeed as Basil's spiritual mother and preceptress. It is not hard to discern from a sensitive study of the *Small Asketikon*, the *Life of Macrina* and other documents that Annisa, the ascetic community under Macrina's guidance, was a model to Basil of 'best practice' in Christian ascetic community life, i.e. the cenobitic life. To all this, Peter was the full and direct heir.

IV Notes on Letter 30

What a precious document this is, the only extant writing we have from the hand of Peter,¹³ the last-born of a most remarkable crop of siblings. He replies to Gregory's letter very much in the affirmative, declares that he has written under the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth, urges his brother to go ahead and publish his *Contra Eunomium* I as it is, and to press on with refuting the rest of Eunomius' apologia.

It is interesting to compare Peter's style in this letter with that of his two brothers, and of his sister Macrina, if her prayer before death in the *Vita Macrinae*¹⁴ reflects her manner with any accuracy. Peter's discourse is a tissue of Scriptural passages and allusions, innocent of classical *topoi*, and is far closer to Basil's style in dealing with ascetics, and with Macrina's style, than with Gregory's far more Hellenic manner. Peter articulates his thought from the depths of habitual *lectio divina* and liturgical doxology.

Even so, Peter himself has acquired no small rhetorical skill. Of particular note is his use of the medical art as an analogy for the curing of doctrinal distemper, where he says:

13 J.-R. Pouchet has proposed that Peter may have been the author of the second, spurious part of Basil's Letter 197 (Def. 3.90–99 at 94–99): J.-R. Pouchet, *Basile le Grand et son univers d'amis d'après sa correspondance*, Roma 1992, 519–525.

14 Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* 26 (GNO VIII/1 397–398; SC 178, 218–224).

The strong feeling you show in your discourse will be as acceptable as salt to the palate of the soul. As *bread cannot be eaten*, according to Job, *without salt* (Job 6,6), so the discourse which is not seasoned with the more astringent qualities of God's word will never wake and never move desire.¹⁵

The word here translated here as 'more astringent qualities', is ἀμυκτικωτέροις, as transmitted in codices FZS. It derives from ἀμυκτικός, ἡ, ον used by the physician and medical writer Soranus (2nd cent. AD) for medicines of an irritant or asperitive character—see LSJ Lexicon. In this context Peter is referring to the stimulant, pungent qualities—the 'salt'—of God's word. Some copyist/s failed to grasp the concrete reference and the argument, and thought they might gloss the word in a more 'spiritual' and edifying sense as μυστικωτέροις, 'inmost sentiments', as in codices LBV. But there is no doubt that here Peter is showing the same familiarity with medical matters that emerges again and again with all this family, wherever we look at the evidence: Emmelia, Macrina, Basil, Gregory, and now, Peter. Wholly in Basil's manner, he uses the medical art as an analogy for soul-doctoring.

There is also a brief but valuable testimony that throws light on the spiritual trajectory of Gregory's own life, where Peter says to him:

Now however, you show such good will towards him who led you to the light through his spiritual travail (cf. *Gal* 4,19) ...¹⁶

Evidently Peter means that Basil had toiled for Gregory's 'conversion', not from a life of deplorable sins, but from his public secular career, that he might enter upon service of the Church. From about 364, Gregory had set aside the ascetic ideals of his siblings, and pursued worldly advancement as a professor of rhetoric in Caesarea. It was in that period that he married and possibly had a child. His wife, however, very probably died early, and it had a severe effect on Gregory's expectations.¹⁷ What Basil did in 371/2, was to enable his brother to integrate all these past losses and sorrows, and to channel all his considerable rhetorical and philosophical skills in another way, by proposing a purpose and a trajectory in which Gregory found his vocational stride as a man of the Church, and eventually, as Basil's heir in the theological vocation, beginning

¹⁵ Letter 30,5 (GNO VIII/2 91; tr. Silvas 210).

¹⁶ Letter 30,6 (GNO VIII/2 91; tr. Silvas 210).

¹⁷ On Gregory's choice of a secular career, his marriage, and his transition to episcopal order, see the long study in A. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, Leiden 2007, 15–29.

with the *Contra Eunomium* in which he consciously takes up the baton from Basil and resumes his struggle on behalf of ‘true theology’.¹⁸

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18 The phrase comes from the fragments of a lost letter, *To Xenodorus the Grammaticus*, which Gregory opens by saying: ‘Nothing is more saving (σωτηριωδέστερον) for Christians than true theology (θεολογίας ἀληθοῦς).’ See A. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, Leiden 2007, 246.

PART 2

Translation



Introduction to the Translation

Stuart George Hall

I The Edition

Since Werner Jaeger's second edition was published in 1960, we have a good modern critical text of Gregory's first book against Eunomius.¹ The plan to edit Gregory's surviving work was inspired by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, whose preface to the original 1920 edition is reprinted in 1960.² Jaeger acknowledges this debt. In the second edition he also acknowledges the work of Hadwig Hoerner who assisted the revision.³ In this edition the text is based on more and better MSS than the previous critical edition of F. Oehler.⁴ Its text is both fuller and far more accurate than that of Jacobus Gretser, which was published in 1818 as an appendix to the Paris edition of 1615, and widely used by scholars because it was reprinted by Migne.⁵ Gretser's Latin version, also in Migne, is useful to the translator, though sometimes too free or obscure, and sharing the defects of the text on which it is based. Oehler's edition became the basis of the admirable translation into English of William Moore, published in 1893 with good introductory material and useful exegetical notes.⁶

Since that edition was published, we now have a welcome aid to interpretation and translation in the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition.⁷ This we shall name by its editor "Winling." Raymond Winling reproduces Jaeger's Greek text, but with French translation. The edition is generally excellent and full. It has many references to recent publications and research.

1 W. Jaeger, *Contra Eunomium libri. Iteratis curis edidit Wernerus Jaeger. Pars prior. Liber I et II (vulgo I et XIIB)*, Gregorii Nysseni Opera I, Leiden 1960.

2 Ibid, x–xi.

3 Ibid, xii, xv.

4 *Sancti Gregorii Nysseni opera I*, Halis 1865.

5 PG 45,243–464.

6 *Select writings and letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, translated with prolegomena, notes and indices*, by William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson, Oxford/New York 1893 (NPNF 2nd series 5).

7 R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse. Contre Eunome I, 1–146*, SC 521, Paris 2008; R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse. Contre Eunome I, 147–69*, SC 524, Paris 2010.

II The Arrangement in Sections and Chapters

Migne's edition has unnumbered paragraphs. The only way to refer to it is by column and letter. Jaeger notes Migne's column numbers in his margin, and in our translation these are included in the text. Jaeger's own text is divided into 691 sections, and his enumeration is clearly the one to follow. There are also paragraphs, each consisting of several sections. These are not numbered, but they are followed in the translation.

Of more interest are the chapters. Jaeger prints the Greek *Capitulatio* from three of the MSS, with the interesting statement on the first page: *Argumentum libri primi ab ipso auctore profectum est, cetera a Byzantino librario adiecta sunt*.⁸ I have accepted this, though the ground is not stated. The headings are plainly superior to those given for the other books. It has led me to incorporate the 42 chapter-headings in the body of the translation, as does Winling. To avoid confusion, I have used Latin numerals for these chapters. This arrangement (though not the Latin numerals) was also followed by Moore.

We now have some further valuable research material. Matthieu Cassin examined all the relevant manuscripts, and tabulated all the indications of where the headings should appear in the text. The indications in the MSS are not complete, and sometimes vary. This material is printed as *Annexe II* in Winling (SC 524, 359–364). Winling used this information to determine where the chapter-headings should come in the text, and I have largely followed him. Places where Winling differs from the MSS, or where I differ from Winling, are indicated in my footnotes. The headings are as follows:

- I, 1–7. Preamble: It does not pay to try to do good to those who refuse help.
- II, 8–10. It was right to take up the task of replying when stung by the accusations against my brother.
- III, 11–19. We were quite reasonably emboldened to reply when we observed no great argumentative power in Eunomius' work.
- IV, 20–29. Eunomius used much empty and excessive language in his own work, and paid little regard to chronology.
- V, 30–33. He was wrong to mock the bishops Eustathius of Armenia and Basil of Galatia in his own writing.
- VI, 34–58. An account of the champion of irreligion Aetius, and of Eunomius himself, touching briefly on their origin and careers.

8 "The account of the first book comes from the author himself, the remainder were added

- VII, 59–73. Eunomius is convicted by himself of having presented his Defence when not accused.
- VIII, 74–77. The personal criticisms which he makes of Basil are shown by the facts to be more appropriately made of himself.
- IX, 78–98a. While accusing Basil of failing to stand up for his case at the time of the conflicts he is shown to be himself liable to the charge.
- X, 98b–110. All the insulting terms he uses are proved by the facts to be false.
- XI, 111–118. The sophistry about the prize, which he uses to argue that we admit he faced trial and did not compose his Defence without being accused, is feeble.
- XII, 119–146. It is nonsense to taunt with cowardice one who displayed such courage in disputes with emperors and officials.
- XIII, 147–154. An account of his doctrinal statement and a detailed critique of the statement.
- XIV, 155–160. He was wrong in giving an account of the saving doctrine not to name Father and Son and Holy Spirit as is traditional, but to use other names of his own choice.
- XV, 161–189. He was wrong when he called the being of the Father alone “most authentic and highest,” implying by silence that the being of the Son and of the Spirit is inauthentic and low.
- XVI, 190–204. An examination of the meaning of “subjection,” whereby he alleges that the essential nature of the Holy Spirit is subjected to the being of the Father and the Son, in which it is argued that the Spirit is coordinated with the Father and the Son, not subjected.
- XVII, 205–222. Examination of activities to see which are those natural ones, which Eunomius says accompany the being of the Father and the Son.
- XVIII, 223–230. It is illogical of him to divide his doctrine into a number of beings without providing any demonstration that it is so.
- XIX, 231–241. In calling the divine being “simple” Eunomius allows only a nominal simplicity.
- XX, 242–260. He is wrong to postulate some activity prior to the existence of the Onlybegotten, which produces the personal being of Christ.
- XXI, 261–269. Their blasphemy is more heinous than the error of the Jews.
- XXII, 270–293. One ought not to attribute greater and less to the divine being; including an elaborated statement of Church doctrine.

by a Byzantine librarian.” See W. Jaeger, *Contra Eunomium libri. Iteratis curis edidit Wernerus Jaeger. Pars prior. Liber I et II (vulgo I et XIIB)*, Gregorii Nysseni Opera I, Leiden 1960, 3–7.

- XXIII, 294–316. The teaching of the faith is not unattested, being supported by scriptural testimonies.
- XXIV, 317–340. It is nonsense when he elaborates arguments about size and superiority of works and activities in the doctrines of religion.
- XXV, 341–358. The one who argues that the Father is older than the Son by some conceivable interval will be obliged to say that the Father is also not without beginning.
- XXVI, 359–385. The kind of thinking which was applied to the Father and the Son will not also fit the creation, as they try to make it, but the Son must be confessed as eternally with the Father, and the creation as having its origin from some fixed time.
- XXVII, 386–405. His suggestion that the same activities produce the same works, and that variation in works indicates varied activities, is nonsense.
- XXVIII, 406–418. Eunomius' suggestion, that an invariable bond can be maintained by the harmony of the natures, is nonsense.
- XXIX, 419–438. His idea of resolving ambiguity in the activities by reference to the beings, and vice versa, is nonsense.
- XXX. There is no divine word commanding such researches; including an argument on the futility of philosophizing on these things.
- XXXI, 439–445. The consideration of providence is enough for knowledge of the identity of being.
- XXXII, 446–459. The proposition, "The mode of generation follows the mode of likeness," is unintelligible.
- XXXIII, 460–473. Eunomius' statement, that the mode of generation is indicated by the natural rank of the one who generates, is nonsense.
- XXXIV, 474–503. An account of Eunomius' attacks on the *homoousion* and a critique of his statements.
- XXXV, 504–529. An argument that the Anomean doctrine tends towards Manicheism.
- XXXVI, 530–534. A further cursory account of the Church's teaching.
- XXXVII, 535–548. A defence of remarks of blessed Basil, which Eunomius attacks, where Basil says that the titles "Father" and "Unbegotten" can have the same meaning.
- XXXVIII, 549–616. A critique of the over-ingenuous syllogisms used by Eunomius for various purposes.
- XXXIX, 617–651. A reply to the question posed by Eunomius, "Is he who is, begotten?"
- XL, 652–657. Eunomius' attempt to maintain his position after the refutation by blessed Basil is feeble.
- XLI, 658–665. What accompanies is not the same as what it accompanies.

XLII, 666–691. An explanation of the meaning of “unbegotten” and a consideration of “eternal.”

We must attend to the lacuna around chapter xxx. While the chapter-heading xxx has been preserved, the whole chapter is apparently lost, together with the end of xxix and the beginning of xxxi. In his *apparatus criticus* to p. 154 Jaeger explains that a further quotation of Eunomius and some discussion of it is presupposed by the lesser quotation at 446 (p. 156,4–8). His note proceeds (translated from the Latin), “Chapter xxx begins at p. 148,26, but chapter xxxii is believed to start at p. 156,4. In the lacuna therefore the whole of chapter xxx has been lost (see p. 6) and a great part of chapter xxxi.”⁹ Chapter xxx appears to have rounded off the various arguments about ἐνέργεια or activities in chapters xxiv–xxix with scriptural testimony, rather as chapter xxiii rounded off chapters xvii–xxii. The heading reads, “There is no divine word commanding such researches; including an argument about the futility of the philosophy involved.” Taken together with the heading of chapter xxxi, “The consideration of providence is enough for knowledge of the identity of being,” and with the surviving discussion in that chapter, we can surmise reasonably well how the argument goes in the lacuna. Fortunately this is the only point at which anything significant is missing from the text.

During the Colloquium of 1986 Dr L.R. Wickham (†) was able to report that a substantial passage in Syriac apparently belonging here had been identified in the quotations of Peter of Callinicus. These consist of two passages, and we have included the published English version in the relevant part of our work.¹⁰ We have added section-numbers §§ 438a–f to the two extracts. While substantial and welcome, they are only part of the material lost from the Greek manuscripts. They give some help in reconstructing Gregory’s argument, as we shall see. Winling includes a French version as *Annexe I* in SC 524, 357–358.

There is also a difficulty about the heading of Chapter xxxii. I have translated this as: “The proposition, ‘The mode of generation follows the mode of likeness,’ is unintelligible.” In the following text (§§ 446–459) the Eunomian statement is repeatedly quoted and commented upon the opposite way round: “The mode of likeness follows the mode of generation.” Jaeger’s *apparatus criticus* to the heading at 6,10–11 offers no alternative reading, and his text agrees

9 *Cap 29 incipit p. 148,26 at cap 32 p. 156,4 ordiri constat. In lacuna igitur periit totum cap 30 (cf. p. 6) et magna pars capituli 31.*

10 See the text at §§ 438–439. The relevant bibliography and details of the sources are set out in the footnotes.

with that of Migne (PG 45 248). So does Winling. Moore (p. 76) simply alters the heading; Gretser's Latin is ambiguous, but appears to follow the Greek literally (PG 45,247). The simplest resolution is to reverse the dative τῷ τρόπῳ and the accusative τὸν τρόπον in the heading, assuming an early scribal error.

III The Structure of the Argument

Three principal divisions appear in the book:

- A. Introduction and historical arguments (§§ 1–146).
- B. Eunomius' statement of faith criticized (§§ 147–473).
- C. Eunomius' responses to Basil criticized (§§ 474–691).

We shall consider these in turn.

A *Introduction and Historical Arguments* (§§ 1–146)

The *Introduction and historical arguments* divide clearly enough from what follows in § 147. The internal articulation is not immediately obvious within this first division, since Gregory smoothes his transitions. I find the following:

- §§ 1–17 An account of the origin of Eunomius' work and Gregory's decision to reply to it.
- §§ 18–33 Attacks on Eunomius' style and rhetoric.
- §§ 34–71 The history of Aetius and Eunomius with special reference to the original *Defence*.
- §§ 72–146 A reply to criticisms of Basil's behaviour and of his remarks about Eunomius. This may subdivide:
 - §§ 72–110 The misconduct of Eunomius in his attacks on Basil.
 - §§ 111–146 The vindication of the words and actions of Basil.

If this is correct, the first division falls into two approximately equal parts, §§ 1–71 and §§ 72–146. Each of these subdivides approximately into two, §§ 1–33, §§ 34–71, and §§ 72–110, §§ 111–146. This would give a structure in four parts:

- 1. Eunomius' writing.
- 2. Eunomius' history.
- 3. Eunomius' conduct.
- 4. Basil's conduct.

This suggestion may be too sophisticated, or perhaps not the sophistication which Gregory himself envisaged.

B *Eunomius' Statement of Faith Criticized (§§ 147–473)*

The second division, *Eunomius' statement of faith criticized*, raises problems which at one point deceived Jaeger. It begins straightforwardly in 147–154, where the heretic's summary of doctrine is stated. It proceeds with a series of passages in which the statement is commented upon seriatim, as follows:

- §§ 147–154 Eunomius' statement.
- §§ 155–204 Divine titles, descriptions and ranks.
- §§ 205–222 Activities and beings.
- §§ 223–316 Divine simplicity; the alleged activity prior to Christ; greater and less in God.
- §§ 317–405 Distinctions of size and seniority rejected, and those based on works and activities.
- §§ 406–437 The invariable bond; ambiguities of being and activity.
- §§ 438–473 Providence, begetting and rank.

On this there is a good deal to say. First there is no particular thematic sequence in what Gregory writes. He is essentially writing a commentary on a given text, even if he expects the arguments to be cumulatively destructive of the whole of Eunomius' position.

Secondly the units I have indicated are of very varied length and contain different numbers of chapters. Excluding the first, which is one chapter, §§ 205–222 consists of only two, while §§ 223–316 has five, §§ 317–405 has four, and the remainder three each. This again reflects the absence of a preconceived system in commentary on the text.

Thirdly the units are clearly defined by the quotation from the statement with which they each begin (see §§ 155, 205, 223, 318, 406, and below for § 438). These apparently quote successively all the words of the statement in §§ 151–154. But two things require further discussion.

In the first place Jaeger has confused the issue at § 317 by printing a passage as if it were a quotation of Eunomius (p. 121,5–10), which would appear to precede the quotation from §§ 152–153 (p. 72,19–73,3), and this occupies § 318. It indeed contains some words of Eunomius from § 152 already quoted at § 223, but several of the expressions printed in spaced type are Gregory's own glosses on a passage which he has already discussed. In my translation the whole has been presented as Gregory's résumé of what precedes, which indeed starts a new chapter and unit, but with the decisive advance in § 318.

In the second place and much more serious is the loss of the final passage for commentary in the lacuna before § 439. We have already considered this lacuna. The newly discovered material is published, and it provides a little help. We must still begin from the only words from the original statement still undiscussed at the end of § 154 (p. 73,13–15), “and to reckon it surely more fitting and more effective in all respects to descend from primary to secondary things.” These words do not appear in the discussions of §§ 430–473, nor is there any obvious discussion of their content. What we find is a resumptive quotation at § 446, “apparently under some necessary compulsion, he claims that he ‘turned away from the works of providence, and went back to the mode of generation, because the mode of likeness follows,’ he says, ‘the mode of generation.’” At § 461 we have the quotation, “because, he says, ‘the mode of generation is revealed by the natural rank of the one who generated.’” These quotations constitute the drift of the chapter-headings XXXII and XXXIII. The chapter which begins in the lacuna is about providence, thus leading into § 446. When the whole unit is brought to a conclusion in §§ 470–473 there are no ironic comments about the fittingness or effectiveness, or about primary and secondary, but about ranks and, above all, γέννησις and ἀγεννησία, begetting and unbegottenness. We might therefore conclude that Gregory never commented on the last words of the statement quoted in § 154, and that chapters XXXI–XXXIII, §§ 439–473, are either a separate unit or attached to what follows. I have preferred the view that in the lacuna before § 439 he quoted the last words of Eunomius’ statement, but may have added more words of Eunomius about providence and the manner or mode of begetting. This is partly confirmed by the words of Peter of Callinicus, in which he attributes to Eunomius the words, “the kind of similarity to be sought” (see § 438b). The Syriac rendered “kind of similarity” is plainly the same as what I translate from the Greek as “the mode of likeness.” Perhaps Gregory quoted the last words of § 154 briefly at the start of chapter XXX, with some general comment about the meaning of the statement as a whole, and then quoted further remarks of Eunomius to show what he meant. This further quotation would include those remarks about providence, begetting and rank which are criticized in detail in §§ 446–473. It is worth noting that Eunomius in the quotation in § 446 attempts to move the argument about God from a *posteriori* to a *priori* considerations, from works of providence to the mode of begetting; and in the quotation in § 461 he is arguing that the status of the Son is determined by the “natural rank” of the Father, again moving from the top downwards. In each case the quotation could be taken as illustrating the last words of the statement in § 154, which state that it is much better to proceed from primary to secondary, from causes to effects. I suppose Gregory to have illustrated the meaning of Eunomius with the quotations he

actually criticizes in §§ 446–459 and §§ 460–473, while first laying it down in §§ 438–445 that the *a posteriori* argument is valid, that the works of providence alone suffice to prove the truth of the homoousian theology.

c *Eunomius' Responses to Basil Criticized (§§ 474–691)*

We turn now to the third main division, where *Eunomius' response to Basil is criticized*. It can be subdivided:

- §§ 474–534 The attack on *homoousion* rebutted.
- §§ 535–548 Basil on “Father” and “Unbegotten”.
- §§ 549–616 Various sophistic arguments rebutted.
- §§ 617–651 “Is he who is, begotten?”
- §§ 652–691 Eunomius' abuse of Basil leads to final expositions on “accompany”, “unbegotten” and “eternal”.

The internal arrangement is perhaps not wholly systematic. It may in some respects reflect that of Eunomius' work, or gather selected points where Gregory thinks that he can score in the debate. But some order may be discerned.

- a. The three chapters with which it begins (§§ 474–534) are fundamental, discussing Eunomius' attack on the central belief in the consubstantial Trinity. By an acknowledged *tour de force* (see § 508) Gregory turns the tables on the imputation that consubstantiality by dividing God leads to Manicheism, attributing that tendency rather to the Anomean doctrine. He rounds off the group by a positive summary of Church teaching (§§ 530–534).
- b. Next come another group of three chapters. The first and third of these (§§ 535–548 and §§ 617–651) each tackle one specific point made by Eunomius. In the middle lies the much longer and more miscellaneous discussion of misleading syllogisms (§§ 549–616), much of which has to do with ἀγεννησία, “unbegottenness”. This then is seen as the heart of Eunomius' error, distracting his readers from the true Church and the true God.
- c. The division ends, again in three chapters, with a defence of the master, Basil, leading to discussions on the divine relations, the climax of which asserts the coeternal Trinity (§§ 689–691).

The whole third division thus has a beginning, a middle, and an end, each consisting of three of Gregory's chapters.

We may now draw together some conclusions about the three divisions of the whole book. First there is a literary and historical part, in which Gregory

moves through an attack on Eunomius' writing, career and character to a vindication of Basil as an historical figure. Secondly he turns to Eunomius' statement of doctrine, which is systematically refuted word by word. Finally Gregory states and vindicates the Church's faith against the attacks on its champion Basil.

IV The Translation

A *Text*

The translation follows the Greek text of Jaeger. Variants must be pursued in his apparatus and not here. Where Jaeger has deleted words by enclosing them in square brackets, I have accepted his emendation and ignored the words. Where he has added words not in the MSS I have included them in diamond brackets ⟨ ⟩.

In a few cases I have not followed exactly Jaeger's attribution of words to Eunomius. The division into sections is exactly his; that into chapters is my own, as stated above, but normally agreeing with Winling. For convenient cross-reference the pages of Jaeger's edition are indicated in square brackets thus: [23]; the columns in Migne are also indicated thus: [249M].

B *Terminology*

I have tried to write in good modern English, using a wide vocabulary to reflect Gregory's highly literary style, and representing the rhetorical force as closely as possible. But there is inevitably a difficulty about the theological and philosophical terminology. The following in particular merit comment:

εἶναι, οὐσία I have tried to render these consistently by the English "be" and "being". This has the advantage that "being" has the same ambiguity in English as οὐσία in Greek. It can refer either to what existent things do: God is, or has eternal being; alternatively, what exists can be referred to as "a being". This practice is sometimes awkward, either because some predicative or auxiliary use of "to be" lies near and confuses the issue, or simply because it is more natural in modern English to say "God exists" than "God is". I have however stayed with this principle, at least where divine beings are concerned. Where the world or created things are said to "be", and where it clearly does not affect the theological content, I have allowed the more natural "exist" to replace it. The words "exist", "existence", "subsist", "subsistence", will be found to represent verbs such as ὑπάρχειν, ὑφίσταναι and their cognates (except ὑπόστασις), where there is direct theological reference. I believe this formula to be superior to the

alternatives. One could make no attempt at consistency, which would make the translation less useful to the theologian. One could consistently give the Greek word in brackets, but that would be ugly, and very tiresome where εἶναι is concerned. Or one could transliterate the Greek οὐσία or replace it with its latinate equivalent “essence”; but the latter offers no acceptable English cognate verb.

ὕποστασις This term is impossible to render by any consistent word in English. The latinate “substance” is ambiguous in English, and would perforce be used in an uncomfortable and perhaps misleading way, certainly a wholly technical way. To make it clear that the word is technical and generally refers to individual concrete or “personal” being one might instead use “subsistence”. I have circumvented the problem either by using the Greek word itself in the text (in English transliteration), or by putting it in brackets after the word or words which represent it. Thus the reader, who is likely to be a student of theology who has met the word as a technical term, always knows when it stands in the original.

ἐνέργεια, ἐνεργεῖν, ἐνέργημα Several possibilities present themselves. My choice would be better informed if I understood better what Eunomius and Gregory have in mind. One might use, as Moore did, the English word “energy”. I have rejected this, on the ground that “energy” is not what the Greek means by ἐνέργεια. I note that it is not among the meanings given for ἐνέργεια in the *Patristic Greek Lexicon*. “Energy” is in English a metaphor borrowed from mechanics, and its primary meaning is given in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* of 1982 as “force, vigour (of speech, action, person)”, and only secondarily “active operation”, which comes near the Greek. In fact it means what δύναμις means in Greek, thus moving into the wrong theological dimension, where *potentia* and *actus* are opposites and not synonyms. If transliteration is thought desirable, the Greek should be represented by *energeia* to make the point clear. I have chosen to translate, and was obliged to choose from terms which are all in some contexts difficult. I have used “activity”. One might have preferred “operation” or “function”, or possibly “act” or “action”. One would prefer to have a cognate verb available. With “activity” it must be “act” or “be active”. “Operation” would offer “operate”, and “function” can function in English as a verb as well as a noun. It is certain that “energize”, which is transitive, would not be satisfactory. The reader will find the translation inconsistent.

ἀγεννησία, ἀγέννητος, γεννᾶν, γέννησις, γεννητός I have not solved the problem of presenting these terms in English. There are several difficulties. English has nothing to correspond singly to the verb γεννᾶν, which can mean “conceive” like the female and equally “beget” like the male. The term “beget” therefore

breaks down on some of the biological analogies used by Gregory. At the same time, while one can cope with “beget”, “begetting”, “begotten” and even “unbegotten”, English taste is strained by “unbegottenness”, which is just the sort of abstract for which English prefers the latinate equivalent. So “ingeneracy” does well for ἀγεννησία, and one could also use “generate”, “ingenerate”, and “generation”. But these last terms are not satisfactory in all contexts. Biologically and humanly, though one might understand that a father or mother generates a child, or a cow or bull generates a calf, it is certainly not the verb one would use in normal English; and the term “generation” normally has very different implications from those of γέννησις. Moore goes for “ungenerate”, “ungeneracy”, which are unattractive hybrids, and has an interesting but unsatisfactory note on the translation of ἀγέννητος, as “unbegotten” (p. 100). Having failed to resolve the problem, I have used either the generate/ingenerate series, or the begotten/unbegotten series according to context.

c *Acknowledgements*

Finally I must acknowledge with thanks the help originally given in improving the translation by members of the 1986 Colloquium, and especially Dr Anthony Meredith and Professors Andreas Spira (†) and Christopher Stead (†), each of whom studied a large portion of the draft closely and contributed important corrections and advice. Without their help it would certainly have been poorer. I have learned much by preparing translations of both *Eun* II and III for later Colloquia, and from the wisdom about Gregory received from the members of those meetings. Dr L.R. Wickham before his death kindly examined the way I have in this edition presented the Syriac fragments in translation. I must also acknowledge the patient kindness with which Professor L.F. Mateo-Seco (†) helped with the original task in 1986–1988, and now, together with Dr Miguel Brugarolas, with the revision of the Translation and Introduction. No one should underestimate the difficulty of converting Gregory’s complicated prose into readable English, and for all our efforts, including the present revision, errors and infelicities doubtless remain for the reader to forgive. If any one thinks that he or she can do better, I shall be the first to rejoice.

Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa: A Refutation of the First Book of the Two Published by Eunomius after the Decease of Holy Basil

Translated by Stuart George Hall

I 1–7. Preamble: It does not pay to try to do good to those who refuse help

1. | Wishing to do good to everybody and bestowing one's benefits indiscriminately on all and sundry was not, it appears, altogether a good thing nor above criticism by the majority. Nor does the waste of further prescription of drugs on the incurably sick contribute anything significant to the intended purpose, whether it be to benefit the recipients or to win praise for the benefactors. Indeed the opposite effect, the beginning of a deterioration, is often brought about by this kind of action. 2. Those seriously ill and already on the point of death easily suffer | further harm from the stronger medicines, and the bestial and irrational (as the Gospel somewhere says) are made worse as they receive unstinted gifts of pearls.¹ It seems to me best therefore, as the divine word has forewarned, to separate out the vile things while supplying the precious, so that the bounty of the munificent man may not be injured by the one who has trampled on the pearl, and who by his insensitivity to good things has spurned his kindness.

22;
248M

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3. | These words came to me as I mused upon one who shared unstintingly with everyone his own good things—I mean the man of God, the mouthpiece of true religion, Basil, who in his abundance of spiritual treasures often spread abroad the grace of his wisdom indiscriminately even on malignant souls—, and that one who never recognized those who were anxious to do him good, Eunomius. 4. This man, in the extremity of the disease of soul which he suffered with regard to the faith, seemed pitiful indeed to all who belong to the church (for who is so unsympathetic as not to pity the perishing?); but it was Basil alone that he moved to undertake his cure, the one who alone in the abundance of his charity attempted the impossible for his healing. Pained at the loss of the man, from his own natural compassion for the distressed he produced

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¹ Mt 7,6.

his *Anatreptic for heresy*² as a sort of antidote for the evil symptoms. His object was to rescue the fellow by these means and restore him to the church.

24 5. Eunomius however, as if smitten with brain-fever, rages at his healer and goes to war and fights and | deems an enemy the one who is straining to drag him up from the pit of wickedness. And he does not do this simply by casual gossip off the cuff to people he meets, but he has put up an inscribed monument accusing himself of this ill disposition. 6. Having with the passage of time enjoyed as much leisure as he wanted, he was all the while pregnant for longer than the largest and bulkiest of beasts, and was heavy with threats while he was still forming the foetus in his secret parts, and has at last with difficulty produced a sort of premature abortion. 7. Those who share the same perversion nurse it and cherish it. But we, on the strength of the prophetic blessing, “Blessed is he who takes your children and smashes them on the rock,”³ now that it has come into our hands, have resolved to take this baby booklet and smash it on the rock as being a Babylonian child; “and the rock was Christ,”⁴ that is the Word of Truth. Only let that power which strengthens the weak come also upon us, by the prayers of him who perfected his own power in bodily sickness.

II 8–10. It was right to take up the task of replying when stung by the accusations against my brother

8. If indeed even now that divinely formed and holy soul were looking in the flesh upon mankind, and his exalted lips were uttering that invincible speech with the grace that belonged to him from the beginning, who would be so bold as to risk any utterance at all on the subject, with that divine trumpet outplaying every word and every note? 9. But since he has flown up whole to God, he 25 who formerly | touched the earth in a slight and shadowy relic of the body, while with the greater part he journeyed ethereally with God, but now has left even that shadow of the body and bequeathed it to this world, and since the drones 252M are buzzing round | the honeycombs of the Word and spoiling the honey, let none blame my audacity in rising to defend the silent lips. 10. Neither have I undertaken the task because I sense in myself any greater ability in writing than others possess; I am quite as aware as anyone else that thousands who abound in the gift of wisdom throng the church of the Lord. Yet I say that, because the

2 This refers to Basil's books usually known as *Contra Eunomium*.

3 Ps 136/137,9.

4 1Cor 10,4.

heritage of the deceased belongs above all to me, both by statute and by natural laws, for this reason I myself claim before others to inherit the right to speak. I may be reckoned among the meanest of those numbered in the church of God, but I am no weaker than the one who broke away from the church to join the other side; for when the body is healthy even its least member is likely through the consent of the whole to be more powerful than what is dying and cut off, though one may be greater and the other less.

III 11–19. We were quite reasonably emboldened to reply when we observed no great argumentative power in Eunomius’ work

11. Let no one attribute bombast to me because of these words, as boasting of vain things above the ability I have. I have not been induced to stoop in bad taste to a battle of words or an exercise in declamation with the man for some sort of juvenile competition. 12. Where winning is useless and unprofitable, I readily concede victory to those who want it. Eunomius I reckon to be generally a “wordy hack”,⁵ | when I see the way he hacks away at doctrine, but to have 26 bestowed exceptional labour on the present work, judging from the expenditure on this composition of no small part of the life of the author, and from the quite excessive delight of his admirers in what has been achieved. 13. It might be expected that one who has laboured for so many long olympiads should have achieved somewhat more than those who have produced spontaneously. A better indication that he spent such effort on the work is the vulgarity of the configurations in which he puts words together and his excessive, pointless enthusiasm for such things. 14. By borrowing from a handy compilation out of certain books⁶ a great pile of expressions, he has laboriously stacked upon his few concepts a vast heap of words, and achieved this “toil-wrought”⁷ task, which the disciples of deception praise and admire, since their defective sense of what is appropriate has robbed them altogether of discernment between the aesthetically good and bad, while they mock and judge worthless those whose heart’s vision has not been obscured by the filth of unbelief. 15. Who would not rightly laugh to see the purpose of the effort promised as on behalf of the doctrines of truth, but the actual effort occupied in vulgarity of words and figures of speech to no effect? For what extra help is gained in refuting | statements which 27

⁵ Jaeger refers to Euripides, *Bacch.* 717.

⁶ Jaeger refers to the lexica of the Atticists.

⁷ An Homeric term, πολύκμητον.

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are (so he thinks) wrong, and in establishing the truth in a dispute, from outlandish invention of expressions used in the work, a newfangled idiosyncratic syntax, “violence done seriously” and conversely “seriousness done violence”, elaborated without engagement with the matters in hand. 16. | It would be impossible to discover which of those acknowledged authorities in speech he was looking to when he brought himself to this, like some conjurer on the stage using parallelism and balanced clauses and alliterative rhyming words to per-orchestrate his piece with syllabic beat as a kind of percussion. 17. Such among many others are also the strummings of his opening passages, these idle and affectedly mannered Sotadics, which I think perhaps he goes through not in a modest fashion, but beating with his foot and tapping noisily with his fingers in time with the beat he utters the pronouncement that “there will be no further need for further works or second editions.”

28

18. In these and suchlike matters I concede that he has the superiority and may enjoy all the victory he is able. I willingly set aside any serious interest in such things, as belonging only to those who look for reputation, if indeed there is reputation to gain by surrendering to such effete verbal practices. Even the noble servant of the Word, Basil himself, who was adorned only with truth, himself | thought it a shame to deck out speech with such ornamentation, and instructed us to concern ourselves only with truth, laying down a good and proper principle. 19. What need is there for one adorned with the ornament of truth to mess about with superfluous work of embellishment, in order to perfect a bastard and hypocritical beauty? For those who lack truth it might perhaps be useful to spice the lie with verbal pleasure, applying this kind of superfluous polish to the style of the speech like rouge; for thus the deception might become persuasive and acceptable to the hearers, exotically worded and flower-wreathed with such rhetorical artifices. But when truth pure and unadulterated by any false covering is seriously pursued by anyone, beauty of itself illuminates the words.

IV 20–29. Eunomius used much empty and excessive language in his own work, and paid little regard to chronology

20. As I now approach the work of examining what has been said, I appear to be in difficulties, like a farmer on a still day, since I am unable to separate the grain from the chaff. So much in this heap of words is superfluous and chaffy, that I almost think that there is in all that has been said by him no substantive fact or argument. 21. To go in order through all that has been written would in my opinion be at once wanting in seriousness, laborious, and out of keeping with

our purpose. Not enough free time is left to us to be able to indulge in trifles, and I think it is the duty of the approved worker to spend his strength, not on trifles, but where his labour produces recognisable fruit.

22. Right in his prologue, giving himself solemn airs as a champion of truth, | he attaches to his opponents the taunt of “infidelity”, saying that “hatred has gone deep in them as a permanent indelible stain;” and | he plumes himself upon things recently “made known” to him, though he does not add what the things known are, but says that a “decision” of disputed points and a lawful justice, which imposes the compulsion of restraint on those who are bold without justice, has been reached in them, saying in his own words but in the Lydian mode precisely this: “and those who are bold without justice are compelled by lawful justice to be restrained,” which he also dubbed “prohibition of the insurgents,” meaning I know not what by “prohibition”;—all this kind of thing, as being a mass of empty material with no useful purpose, I shall omit from my study. 23. But where he has composed a case for the heretical opinion, I think it would be right for me to give it the greatest attention. For that is how the Oracle of divine doctrines⁸ also behaved in the work he himself composed: though there are many able to spin out the argument at length, he proceeds only to the essentials and limits the extent of his subject-matter, collecting the heads of blasphemy from all that had been said in the book of impiety.

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24. If anyone expects to find the order of the work to be exactly repeated in ours, he should first explain what is to be gained. What advantage will it be to the hearers if I disentangle the puzzle and riddle of the title, which he poses to us right at the start like the Sphinx of tragedy, enumerating that new *Defence of the Defence*, the | great amount of nonsense besides, and the long account of the dream? 25. I think the readers are quite exhausted by what the work of Eunomius uniquely preserves, the tawdry meanness of the novelty of the title, and by the vulgarity and self-centredness of his personal reminiscences, the “pains and toils” he relates of himself “as they traversed every land and sea and were proclaimed in all the world.” 26. If this should be written again with the proper addition of the proofs of the lies which abound in the work, who is so tough and indomitable as not to share the nausea caused by the untimely labours? 27. If I too were to recount in detail that inspired history, who is “the one who at the Euxine Sea had earlier offended him by having the same name,”⁹ what sort of life he led, what his interests were, how he “quar-

30

8 Basil.

9 Basil of Ancyra.

relled with the Armenian because of the likeness of their practice,¹⁰ then on what terms they formed a compact with each other and were reconciled, so that they agreed about that invincible and much renowned Aetius," his teacher,¹¹ on whom he bestows these generous praises, then what "was the device and
 31 scheme by which | they brought the fellow¹² to trial, making it a charge that he was in reputation above the rest;" 28.—if I were to relate all these things, would I not be like those who contract eye-disease from frequent contact with those already infected, and myself also seem to be afflicted with the disease of passion for the unimportant, as I pursue his nonsense step by step and examine every detail: who are the "slaves" he mentions "released into liberty" and what
 257M | Montius and Gallus and Domitian¹³ getting into the account, and "false witnesses" and an "enraged emperor" and certain persons "banished into exile." 29. What could be more pointless than these narratives to someone who means not merely to tell a story, but to refute the opponent of heretical doctrine? Much more do the historical reports on these topics appear the more useless; I doubt if the author himself could get to the end without falling asleep, despite the natural affection for their offspring, which possesses fathers. Deeds are indeed reported there, sufferings for the word highly exaggerated, and the story told with the grave tone of tragedy.

V 30–33. He was wrong to mock the bishops Eustathius of Armenia and Basil of Galatia in his own writing¹⁴

30. But I may by the act of refusal linger longer than I ought on unprofitable matters. Like someone driving his horse through mud and getting covered with filth from it, I also may similarly by the mention of the things written as I proceed through the work mar what I write. To prevent this I deem it prudent so far
 32 as possible | to jump with a single high, swift leap of argument across the whole heap of such stuff—it is a considerable advantage to get away quickly from such filth—and urge the argument on beyond the history, so that the words of bitterness do not seep into my own book. 31. It may well suit Eunomius'

10 Basil the Great was a close colleague in the monastic life of Eustathius of Sebaste, before their various disagreements.

11 The "anomoean" views of Aetius united many parties in opposition. See §§ 37 ff. below.

12 Eunomius.

13 For these three persons see § 47 below.

14 The MSS mark this chapter heading before § 27; I put it here, with Winling.

language to use of the priests of God such expressions as, “putting to rout targe-
teers and staffbearers and spearmen,” “seeking out and letting the hidden one
not escape,” and whatever else he shamelessly writes against venerable priests.
32. Just as in classes for secular rhetoric, as an exercise in fluency of tongue
and mind, boys are set the task of inveighing against some unnamed person, so
the author goes straight and tramples on the persons mentioned, gives vent to
abusive language and without specifying the crimes scatters the dregs of mere
insults upon them. He compiles slander against them and incorporates dis-
agreeable words in his invective, “a greycoat soldier”, “both holy and execrable”,
| “pale with fasting and murdering from bitterness”, and much more ribaldry of 33
that sort. Just as in secular processions a person is reproached for gross immod-
esty if he revels without a mask, so he does not conceal his bitterness with any
veil, but with language naked and unashamed he utters his waggon-talk.¹⁵ 33.
Then he acknowledges what it is that irritates him: “These people,”¹⁶ he says,
“strive hard to stop many becoming involved” in their deception. That is why
he gets angry, because they cannot as of right stay in all the places they wish, but
according to the decree of the one then in power Phrygia became their abode,
to prevent many being harmed by evil company, and that is what he complains
about when he | writes, “the great severity of the miseries, the barely tolera- 260M
ble sufferings, and the noble endurance of what is suffered, that they should
exchange the land of their birth for Phrygia.”

**VI 34–58. An account of the champion of irreligion Aetius, and of
Eunomius himself, touching briefly on their origin and careers¹⁷**

34. Quite so. Were not the things that happened an insult to the Oltiserian?
They brought ruin on his father’s reputation and damaged the nobility of his
birth, in such a way that the things Eunomius now grumbles at might not have
been chosen by the renowned and two-named¹⁸ Priscus, his father’s father. That
is why he has the fine and famous account of his ancestry: the mill and the
whip and the servant’s | dole and the rest of the inheritance of Canaan;¹⁹ 35. 34
and for these was it necessary to abuse “those who contrived their exile”? I too

¹⁵ Jaeger lists Gregory’s borrowings from Demosthenes in this sentence.

¹⁶ Eunomius refers to his opponents.

¹⁷ Winling puts this heading before § 36, but the MSS have it here.

¹⁸ In Roman style.

¹⁹ Perhaps alluding to the servile status imposed upon the surviving Canaanites when Joshua conquered the land of Israel, *Jos* 9,23.

agree with this. Those who made these things happen to them deserve their reproach, if indeed there are or have been such, because “knowledge of earlier life having been completely hidden by these means takes away the memory of nobler things,” and prevents close investigation of things earlier than the present, such as the rank with which they each originally started, how far they followed the way their fathers lived, what small or greater thing worthy of citizens they were conscious of when “they were so well known and reputable that they were noticed even by emperors” (as he proudly boasts in the present work) “and all the supreme authorities were concerned about them and in most of the empire their affairs were discussed.”

36. Surely the greatest damage done by these means has been either the work of this wordsmith, or that of his champion and tutor in the same kind of life, Aetius. He seems to me to have aped Aetius, with an eye not so much to falsehood in doctrines | as to the ample prosperity of his life. I say this not on the basis of guesswork, but by listening to those who know. 37. Matters affecting this Aetius I heard once from Athanasius bishop of Galatia,²⁰ a man who prized nothing above the truth, and who produced a letter of George of Laodicea as public evidence of his story. 38. He said that Aetius had not from the start committed himself to wrong doctrines, but had later championed this innovation as a livelihood. When he had just got himself released from slavery to Ampelis his owner (I had better say nothing about how he did this, lest I appear to relate the story maliciously), he was at first a smith, engaged in this hot and dirty manual work, with short hammer and little anvil sitting under a hair tent as he eked out a mean and laborious living at this trade. 39. What worthwhile income could come from making minor repairs to bronze castings and filling | holes and | beating out tin and soldering the bottoms of pans? But the cause of his change of life was an incident which happened to him because of his trade. 40. He once accepted from a soldier’s wife a piece of gold jewellery, a necklace or bracelet, in order that he should repair the effects of a blow, but he deliberately deceived the woman; he took away the gold and gave her the piece back in bronze, of the same size as the gold and similar in appearance through a plating dip whereby he covered the bronze with gold. The woman was taken in by the appearance—he was clever at cheating his customers through the tricks of the coppersmith’s trade—but in time she detected the fraud about the gold as the plating wore off from the bronze. 41. She then prosecuted the thief, some soldiers having been stirred up to anger on grounds of kinship and solidarity. He paid the penalty for his crime which a cheat and a thief might be expected to pay, then gave up his

20 This Athanasius was Bishop of Ancyra 360–364.

trade with an oath, as if it had not been his choice but his occupation which had landed him in theft. 42. After that he became the disciple of one of the wandering physicians, so as not to be entirely in want of necessary sustenance, and | went around in the guise of a physician among the poorest homes and destitute people. 43. Then, when gradually the idea had brought him wealth, an Armenian, gullible as foreigners are, was persuaded to consult him as a physician, and often supplied him with money. He now thought it too little to assist others in the craft, and sought both the status and title of physician for himself. 44. So thereupon he took part in medical conferences, and becoming involved in controversial arguments he was one of the noisy ones. Putting forward his own view at the crucial point in the debate he won no little regard from those who hire loud mouths to promote their own quarrels. 37

45. Though he was now by these means getting more butter on his barley-bread, he thought he should not stay in that occupation either, but after a short while quietly discarded medicine as he had tinkering. Arius the anti-God had just sown those seeds of darnel, the harvest of which is Anomean doctrines, and the conversations at surgeries were then ringing with the noise of that dispute. 46. So after exercising himself in this occupation and watching for a way into logical argument with echoes of Aristotle, he was famous for exceeding Arius the father of the heresy in the novelty of his speculations. It might be better to say that by perceiving the consequence of Arius' propositions he appears to have been shrewd and able to discover secrets, | in demonstrating that the creature and what is from nothing is unlike the one who created and produces from nothing. 47. | So while he was tickling the novelty-loving ears of those infected with this disease, knowledge of this nonsense comes also to Blemmys Theophilus.²¹ He had some previous connexion with Gallus, and through him Aetius also insinuated himself into the court.²² When the foul murder was committed at that time by Gallus against the proconsul Domitian and Montius, all his fellow conspirators naturally suffered the same fate as he. Aetius however escaped the penalty, not being judged worthy to suffer punishment with the others responsible for the murder. 48. After this, when great Athanasius was removed by imperial force from the church of Alexandria, and George the 38 264M

21 Probably Theophilus, *proconsularis Syriae*, who was lynched during a food riot in 354 (PLRE I, 907).

22 Gallus, nephew of Constantine I, reigned as Caesar in Antioch 351–354. He had the two distinguished officials lynched by soldiers for opposing him, the praetor Domitianus and the quaestor Montius Magnus; he was deposed and executed by the emperor Constantius II (PLRE I, 224–225; 262; 535).

Tarbesthenite²³ was tearing his people apart, Aetius was again an Alexandrian, no worse off than any who enjoyed the Cappadocian's hospitality and board. He was not inexpert in flattery, so that George, who was also a Canaanite²⁴ and consequently favourably disposed to his kith and kin, was pleased at this, being
 39 long since | in the grip of doctrinal perversion, and Aetius found a prize lying within his grasp.

49. These things did not escape his true zealot, our Eunomius. He was aware that his natural father, an excellent person in everything except becoming his father, lived a decent and respectable life, but difficult because of poverty and burdened with countless tasks. He was a farmer bending at the plough and working very hard at his small holding, and through the winter when he had some respite from work on the land he contrived by carving the elements of reading and writing for children to supplement his livelihood with earnings from that. 50. Eunomius then, observing how things stood with his father, said goodbye to the plough and mattock and the rest of his father's implements, so as not to get involved himself in the same wretched labours. He first became a pupil of the science of Prunicus,²⁵ and after learning shorthand he lived at first, I believe, with one of his kinsmen, earning his keep in return for his writing services. Then while acting as tutor to his employer's boys he gradually went on to a craving for rhetoric. I pass over what intervened, his career in his homeland and how he came to be in Constantinople and with whom.

40 51. Afterwards, having been busy with vest and girdle, as they say,²⁶ when | he saw that his efforts in this direction all amounted to little and in no way met his desire, he forsook all other interests in life and attached his admiration exclusively to Aetius. That was in my opinion a sensible choice from his point of view as a life's ambition. 52. From the moment he joined in that unspeakable philosophy, from Aetius "all things spring for him unsown and unploughed."²⁷ He is
 265M a wise man where his | interests are concerned, and knows how one may most readily win over the more easily affected men. 53. Because humanity is for the most part easily ensnared by pleasure, and this feeling attracts a strong inclination of human nature, which readily declines from harder activities towards

23 The location of George's birth-place in Cappadocia is unknown. He was appointed Bishop of Alexandria when Athanasius was sent into his third exile in 357, and after various contributions to the anti-Nicene cause was lynched in Alexandria in 361.

24 Apparently metaphorical, meaning something like 'heathen'.

25 A somewhat abusive term for the art of shorthand writing.

26 This figure of speech, to judge by the context, means that he had sought public status or recognition.

27 Jaeger refers to Homer, *Od* ix 109.

the ease of pleasure, Eunomius, in order that he might most easily win over many to join him in sick doctrines,²⁸ to this end becomes pleasant to those he initiates, setting aside the uphill and burdensome aspects of virtue as dissuading acceptance of the mystery. 54. The kind of things they teach, those who are tricked into accepting the pollution and all that they utter and bring into the open, that secret initiation ceremony and such things as they are taught by the reverend hierophant of the mysteries, a manner of baptisms and commendation of character and all that sort of thing, any who have time to learn in detail may enquire of those who can with innocence bear to mention improper things.²⁹ We shall remain silent. It is not guiltless for those who have learnt to prize purity even in word to mention such things in order to accuse them, nor | to sully their writing with discordant narratives, though truth attach to the words. 41

55. The reason for mentioning the matters just discussed was this. Just as Aetius found irreligion profitable, in the same way it came about that the accomplished disciple also no less than the teacher found a fat living in the simplicity of those deceived. What was the great crime of Basil of the Euxine Sea or Eustathius of Armenia,³⁰ over whom the long historical digression sprawls? In what way have they injured the personal character of these men? How is it they did not rather enhance their new esteem? For where did these get their reputation and become so famous except through those men?—if indeed their accuser is telling the truth. 56. The fact that, “being highly respected,” as the writer testifies, they judged those who had no reputation at all to be worthy opponents of themselves, constitutes a reasonable ground for pride in those who oppose the ones held to be superior to others. The result of this was that the meanness and obscurity of their former life was lost to sight, and they were known for what happened later. Those were things prudent men would in any case avoid—no wise man is likely to want to be famous for badness—but to such as these it seems the very peak of good fortune. It is like the story of the obscure | and unimportant person in Asia who longed to become famous among the Ephesians.³¹ It never occurred to him to do something great and 42

28 We have changed Jaeger's punctuation here.

29 For a detailed discussion of Eunomius' baptismal practice, see R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 330–345.

30 Bishops Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius of Sebaste in Armenia were leaders of the so-called “homoeousian” party. They led a successful council at Ancyra in 358, which shifted imperial policy nearer the Nicene doctrines and away from those who would allow the teachings of Aetius and Eunomius.

31 Gregory compares Eunomius with Herostratus, who sought notoriety by setting fire to the

brilliant—he could not anyway—but he became more notorious than those known for the greatest deeds by contriving immense damage to the Ephesians. 57. One of their public buildings was particularly famous for its beauty and magnificence, and the fellow, having burned down that great work of art, confessed his soul's passion when he was tried for the crime, saying that | he so valued being known by many that he intended the name of the criminal to be remembered along with the greatness of the evil. 58. Such in the case of these men was the purpose of notoriety, except insofar as there is a difference which makes the evil worse: it is not lifeless buildings, but the living edifice of the church itself which they are destroying, using doctrinal confusion to set it on fire.

VII 59–73. Eunomius is convicted by himself of having presented his Defence when not accused³²

59. I shall postpone discussion of doctrine to its proper place. But meanwhile let us enquire at this point about the complaint in his introduction that he is hated by unbelievers because he tells the truth, what sort of truth he uses. It is not perhaps untimely to find out how truth stands in questions outside doctrine, and to apply that standard also to doctrines. “He who is faithful in little,” it says, “is faithful also in much”,³³ and he who is wrong in little is wrong also in much. 60. As he begins to write his | *Defence of the Defence*—that original and absurd title and subject of the work—he says that the reason for such a paradoxical expression derives solely from the contradiction by his opponent of his previous work. 61. That work certainly bore the name *Defence*. Our teacher took it that, since a defence is only a defence against the charges laid, if someone had written freely about himself, the composition was something other than a defence. Eunomius does not deny (because of the manifest absurdity) that the defence is made to a previous charge, but says that as one accused of the gravest offences he has defended himself before the court. How much falsehood there is in this will, I think, be apparent from what has been said.

62. He complains bitterly of “many scarcely tolerable sufferings” inflicted on him by those who condemned him. What they were can be learned from his own writings. How is it that he has suffered these things, if he has written a

famous temple of Artemis at Ephesus in 356 BC. Like most ancient writers who tell the tale, Gregory refrains from naming him.

32 MSS have the heading before § 60; I agree with Winling in placing it here.

33 *Lk* 16,10.

defence to the charges? If he used the *Defence* to refute the accusations, that tragic story is just false, a hollow fiction.³⁴ But if he did suffer what he reports, he obviously did not suffer without having made the defence. 63. The purpose of every defence is to make sure that those who give the verdict are not misled by false accusation, unless of course he tries to say that he did submit the defence at the trial, but being unable to convince the appointed judges he | lost 44 the case to his opponents. But he said no such thing at the trial, nor was he likely to. How could he, when he confesses in the published work that he was unwilling to accept prejudiced and hostile judges? “We confess we were convicted,” he says, “in silence, for criminals and malignants had insinuated into the place of the judges.” 64. He must have had a great struggle, I think, and his mind was on other things, when he failed to notice he had introduced the pre- 269M tentious solecism into his sentence, | slipping so pompously into his language the Attic “insinuated” (εἰσφρησάντων). There is one use among those who speak correctly, as is known to those who have studied rhetoric, and another affected by the new atticist. But this is nothing to our purpose.

65. Shortly afterwards he adds this: “If he proposes to refute my defence on the ground that I would not treat my accusers as judges, he does not realize how naïf he is.” When then and before whom has our sharp friend entered his defence, if he demurred to the judges on ground of bias and was silent at the trial, as he himself insists? Look at our eager champion of truth, how he turns his coat and deserts to falsehood; in word he honours truth, but in deeds | he 45 opposes it. 66. But it is a nice thing that he is too feeble even to put the case for falsehood. For how did the same man both justly defend himself against the charge alleged, and also prudently refuse to speak to the charge because the court was biased? Yet he plainly shows in the very work which he entitled *Defence* that no court ever met to try him.

67. The introduction of the work is directed not at particular named judges, but at unnamed persons of that time and “those yet to be”.³⁵ In their case I quite agree he much needed a defence, not like the present one which needs another defence to defend it, but one able with dignity and good sense to convince the audience that he was not merely imagining things when he wrote it, since he assembled to try him a court of persons who were not there, or perhaps yet to be born, and defended himself to those who did not exist and objected to those

34 The *Defence* was probably always a literary tract, not a statement in any kind of trial. The text with English version is in R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 35–55.

35 Some of these words are apparently from Eunomius.

who never were, “lest they distinguish falsehood from truth by a majority, giving weight to the larger number.” 68. It is certainly proper to address such a defence to such judges who are still in their fathers’ loins and to think he is speaking honestly, since he knew he was going alone against the beliefs of everybody, and thinks that the misguided fancy of his own soul is more reliable than the views of those who honour the name of Christ throughout the whole world.

69. Let him write, if he likes, another *Defence* for the second *Defence*. The
 46 present one is not a rectification of past mistakes, | but an argued case for the charges. Everyone knows that any legal defence looks to the refutation of the charge brought. One who is accused of theft or murder, for instance, or of some other offence, either denies the deed absolutely, or shifts the blame for the crime to someone else; or if neither of these is possible he pleads for pardon and mercy from the deciding judges. In this case however the speech contains no denial of the charges, no shift of blame to others, there is no recourse to mercy
 272M nor promise | of future good behaviour, but the charge alleged is sustained with industrious elaboration. What is put forward is, to use his own words, a “book of irreligion”, not vaguely laying the charge, but actually propounding the pattern of irreligion. The defence presents the case for irreligion, not refuting the charge but confirming what is alleged. 70. If the doctrines of religion were obscure it might perhaps be less perilous to propose rash innovations. But when the teaching of correct thought is firmly fixed in all the souls of religious persons, does the one who loudly contradicts things generally known by all defend himself against the charges laid, or does he not rather attract the wrath of his hearers against him and make himself his own harshest accuser?—the latter, I think. 71. If there are as the writer puts it either hearers of the defence arguments or prosecutors of his crimes against religion, let him say either how the
 47 prosecutors are going to concede, or what | verdict the judges will bring in about him, when the guilt has already been argued by the defence.

72. However, these remarks have somehow diverged from the sequence of the argument, because of the defence being not well presented. Our present object is not to discuss how he ought to have defended himself, but whether he should have made a defence at all. We should return to our point, which is that the one who objects to falsehood has been convicted by his own words, thus: “I have been judged,” he says, “and faced unlawful judges, and being led about by land and sea suffered hardship from the sun’s heat and dust.” Then he again wraps up the falsehood, hammering out nail with nail as the proverb says, repairing this lie with another lie. 73. When everyone knows as well as he does that he uttered not a word in court, he says he demurred to the biased court and was convicted in silence. How could anyone be more clearly proved to contradict both the truth and himself? When he is blamed for the title of the

work, he attributes the necessity for the defence to the judicial process; when he is proved to have said nothing before the judges, he rejects the court and dismisses the judges.

VIII 74–77. The personal criticisms which he makes of Basil are shown by the facts to be more appropriately made of himself³⁶

74. Look at this vehement defender of the truth, how vigorously he resists the lie. Then a man like that dares to call great Basil “evil” and “wicked” and “lying”, and goes as far as “rash, ignorant, unlawfully enrolled,³⁷ and uninitiated in divinity”, and adds to the catalogue of abuse by | scattering “dementia” and “mania” and thousands of similar terms all over his book, as if he thought his own harshness would be enough to outweigh the testimony of all mankind, who revere the name of “the Great” like that of one of the ancient saints; and he thinks that the one unimpaired by blemish can be injured only by abuse. The sun is not so lowly that anyone throwing stones or other things can hit it. 48

75. The missiles fall back on the thrower, while the target stays up out of range. | 273M
If anyone accuses the sun of dimness, the light of his ray is not darkened by the sneers, but the sun will remain sun even when sneered at, while the one who slanders the ray as dim will be proved to be suffering from defective eyesight. And though he may very much wish, in the manner of that *Defence*, to convince those who hear him and read him that they should not subscribe to the general view about the sun nor allow greater authority to the experience of most people than to his own theory, “giving weight to the larger number”, his ravings will be in vain with sighted persons, and he will achieve nothing by setting himself against the general view.

76. Someone who supports Eunomius should persuade him to put a bridle on his mouth, not break loose in disorderly argument, not kick against goads and not speak rashly against the honoured name, but at the mere recollection of Basil the Great should fill his soul with reverence and awe. 77. What can he gain from | this wholesale abuse, when the one is universally regarded as what he is proclaimed to be by his life, his writing and the general testimony of the world, while the other demonstrates that he is trying to destroy his own character, as being unable (as the Gospel says somewhere) to speak good things because he is evil, but utters from the abundance of the heart and provides for 49

36 Winling puts this heading after the first sentence of § 74, but the MSS mark it here.

37 Probably implying that Basil’s ordination was invalid or irregular.

himself from his store of evil?³⁸ Because words which do not fit the true state of affairs are mere abuse, what is written is its own refutation.

IX 78–98a. While accusing Basil of failing to stand up for his case at the time of the conflicts he is shown to be himself liable to the charge³⁹

78. He postulated a certain place, in which he says the dispute over doctrines was held, but the place is unnamed and not indicated by any recognizable reference, so that his audience is obliged to make a random and uncertain guess.⁴⁰ There, he says, was held “a synod of select persons from all parts”, and he swells rhetorically to a juvenile climax, “bringing to view”⁴¹ no doubt his construction of the events. 79. Then he says that “certain teachers”, whose names he again does not mention, have “the final lap to run”, and that our tutor and father is present and “cheers them on,” but “when the decision transfers power to the opposition he flees the places, having deserted his post,” and “pursues some homeland smoke,” and he much disparages this man for cowardice in his accusation, as anyone who is interested can see from what is written there. I have
50 no time to spray my writings with the vomit of his spleen, | but will go on to the point that led me to mention these matters.

80. What is that unnamed place in which the account of doctrines is examined? What is “the occasion which summons the noblest to the contest”? Who are “the persons who by sea and land drove themselves on to the common task”? What does he mean by “the world on tiptoe for the result as it waits for
276M the | decisive verdict”? And who was it that “arranged the contest”? 81. Or let it be allowed that these things serve after the fashion of children in school by such devices to give some weight and bulk to the text; but this one thing he must tell us, who was that “invincible warrior whom,” he says, our teacher “was scared to tangle with”? If that too is a fiction, let him win again and take the prize for futility, and we shall keep quiet. In shadowboxing for no useful end true victory is to concede what goes with that sort of victory. 82. But if he is talking about the events in Constantinople and is referring to that council and is inflating his account with those tragic scenes and is calling himself the great

38 *Mt* 12,34–35.

39 Winling and the MSS put this heading here.

40 Eunomius is probably referring to the Synod of Constantinople 359–360, which ratified the anti-Nicene decisions of Seleucia. See § 82 below.

41 The phrase is a cliché of elementary rhetoric.

and doughty competitor, we should admit the charges, since we were present at the time of the contest and did not tangle with the contestants.

83. Let the one who reproaches Basil with cowardice show whether he went into the ring himself, whether he uttered a word on behalf of his brand of religion, whether he spoke with the earnestness of youth, whether he fought famously with his adversaries. He would not be able to say that without manifest self-contradiction. For he has admitted | that he received in silence the verdict brought in by the judges. 84. If it was necessary to speak at the contests, which is what he decrees now in his book, why is he then condemned without a word? But if he was right to prefer acquiescence before the judges, what lottery allows him to be praised for silence, while our acquiescence is ground for vituperation? What more unfair could be conceived than this absurdity, that, of the two who wrote works after the contests, he should say that he himself has made his defence at the right time, though it is so long after the event, whereas he abuses the one who replies to his case for missing the time of the contests? Or perhaps he had to contradict with preemptive slanders the forthcoming book? That seems to be the sole purpose of the charge. 85. If he knew in advance what he (Basil) was yet to write, then why on earth did he not present his case at the time of that judgment? That he did not present this defence at the trial is clear, on his own admission. I must again quote the same words: "We confess we were convicted," he says, and adds the reason: "for evil persons," he says, had been appointed to give judgment, or rather, as he himself puts it, "had insinuated into the place of the judges." 86. That he again testifies to the proper time for his defence is clear from other things he said. His words are these: "But that it was not by my contriving; but constrained by the mediators that I was led to make my defence at the proper time and in the proper manner, has become clear from the events themselves and from this man's (Basil's) words." What then will he say, since he everywhere readily twists the | argument? Should Basil not have kept silent at the contests? Why then was Eunomius speechless at the same contests? But the defence after the contests is timely for one; why then is the reply to what is said untimely for the other? 51

87. | But above all, it seems, the argument of the holy one is true, that under pretext of defence he elaborated his own doctrines as he saw fit, and the true partisan of Phineas, the one who destroyed with the sword of the word every one that committed fornication against the Lord,⁴² has applied the cleaver which cures the soul, but abolishes irreligion, I mean the contradiction of blasphemy. 88. But if he remains contrary, and the one who has put his own soul to 277M

42 Num 25,7.

death by apostasy does not accept the medical care, the blame lies with the one who chose evil. Secular logic agrees with this.⁴³ Such then is Eunomius, against the truth and against us. We could according to the ancient law, which permits equal retaliation by those attacked,⁴⁴ have pelted him unstintingly with taunts and with great ease could have bestowed generous vituperation on the one who did the wrong. If he was so rich in insult and vituperation against one who allowed no entry to blame, how many such words might those be expected to find who lampoon his own splendid life? 89. But since we have been trained from the beginning by the disciple of truth to follow gospel discipline, not | knocking out an eye in vengeance nor repaying tooth with tooth,⁴⁵ knowing that evil things are dissolved by their opposites, and that nothing said or done wrong would develop to an intolerable degree if something better were to intervene and break the constant succession of evils. 90. So also the sequence of vituperation and insult is halted in its forward movement by patience, so that if anyone repels insult with insult and vituperation with vituperation, he will surely make turpitude grow by feeding it with its own sort.

91. I will therefore omit the whole intervening argument, which consists of insult, mockery, vituperation and jibes, and address my work to the examination of doctrine. If anyone should say that I have avoided vituperation because I am untrained in retaliation in kind, let him observe himself and see how great is the tendency towards the worse, which slips down into sin of its own accord and without any particular action. 92. To become evil resides merely in our choice, and the will often suffices for the completion of evil. But the tendency is much stronger in those who transgress with the tongue. Other sins need time and actions and outside cooperation to bring them about. Speech is a spontaneous outgrowth with transgression ready to hand. 93. The proof of these words is the work of Eunomius itself, which is in our hands; the diligent observer will find it to be the steep slope of verbal sin, which it is all too easy to imitate even if one has no experience | of the practice of slander. Why need one labour at inventing insults, when it is possible to use against the slanderer what he has himself written? | His whole recitation in this part of the work consists of lies and slanders to match the fictitious instances in it, and there is no crudity his writing omits. 94. "Cunning," he says, "contentious," "hostile to truth," "trickster," "deceiver," "contrary to the opinions and memories of most people," "unabashed by the evidence of fact," "indifferent to fear of law and censure of

43 Jaeger cites Plato *Resp* X, 617 E.

44 *Lev* 24,19–20.

45 *Mt* 5,38–39.

men,” “unable to distinguish truth from cunning;” to these he adds, “both insolence and readiness with vituperation,” and then says that he is “discordant and full of conflicting notions,” “composing his work from incompatible elements,” “going to war with his own words and uttering contradictions.” 95. He wants to say many evil things about him, but is then unable to satisfy his bitterness of soul with freshly coined insults. Since he has nothing to say, he often goes back to the same words, and after saying them once repeats the same again, and a third time and a fourth and even more, as though he were turning back on a return course in his work through the same insults and raving vituperation, up and down through the same territory, so that one no longer resents the audacity of his insults, as anger subsides through satiation with the words used. 96. One might be disgusted | rather than getting angry, the jibes are so servile, wanting in taste and vulgar, no different from a thoroughly drunk old woman muttering through her teeth. 55

97. What then is to be done? Must we go into the details and laboriously argue against all the insulting words that the subject of these fictions was not like that? But in that way we too might seem to take part in insulting one who shone on his generation like a heavenly luminary, if we sufficiently demonstrate in words that he was no rogue or criminal. 98. But I remember that divine voice of his, how he quoted as prophetic of Eunomius the words from the prophecy, where it compares him to shameless women, who apply their own reproaches to decent women.⁴⁶

x 98b–110. All the insulting terms he uses are proved by the facts to be false⁴⁷

For who is it that his words proclaim “hostile to truth”? Who is it that is “opposed to the views of most people”? Who demands of those who read his book that they should not look to the multitude of witnesses nor regard antiquity nor incline in their judgments towards the reliability of those who are taken as the stronger side? 99. Does the same man really both write this and make the earlier points? Does he expect his hearers to follow his own innovations, and at the same time to denigrate others as going against received opinions? And as to “unabashed by the evidence of the facts and human censure” and the rest of the material of the same kind which he alleges, I leave it to the judgment of

⁴⁶ Basil, *CE* I 23 (SC 299, 254,29–256,32), alluding to *Jer* 3,3.

⁴⁷ Winling puts this heading before § 88, but the MSS have it here.

56;
281M

readers to decide which it truly applies to: is it the one | who decrees alike for himself and for his circle sobriety and decency and absolute purity of soul and body through strictest chastity, or the one who forbids us to make difficulties for the character which is advancing as it chooses through the appetites of the body, or to oppose pleasures, or to be strict about such a serious way of life?—He says there is no harm to the soul constituted by such things, but that the heretical faith alone is enough to bring the person to perfection.

100. If he denies that their teachings are of this kind, I would entreat him, as would every right thinking person, to tell the truth in such matters when he makes denial; but his genuine disciples will not allow him to take the denial further, or his greatest theoretical principle will collapse and the conspiracy of those who pay attention to the doctrine chiefly because of it will melt away.

101. And as to which of them is the “insolent and indifferent to censure of men”, would you like us to base our answer on life lived in youth or on later events? On either score you might find the rebuke of insolence rebounding upon him. Neither youth nor subsequent career gives the same testimony to both men. 102. Let the author remind himself how he lived, both as a young man in his own country and in Constantinople, and let him hear from those who know what they can attest in the one being criticized. 103. If anyone wishes to look into their subsequent careers, let him say who deserves | such a name, the one who even before his consecration unstintingly spent his patrimony on the poor, and especially in the time of famine during which he was in charge of the church, still officiating in the order of presbyters, and afterwards withheld nothing even of the remainder, so that he too might boast with the Apostle that “I ate no bread unearned”,⁴⁸ or the one who turned the championing of doctrine into a means of income, who slipped into houses uninvited, neither disguising his disgusting affliction⁴⁹ by his personal conduct nor having regard to the natural revulsion of healthy persons towards such, he who according to the ancient law because of contact with the mark is expelled from the populated encampment.⁵⁰

104. “Impetuous” moreover and “violent” and “liar on either count” Basil is called by “one who patiently and gently chastises those in league against him.” Such is the affectation of the words about him adopted in the book by the one who utters no excessive bitterness when he might be well able to produce it.

48 2 *Thes* 3,8.

49 Philostorgius, *HE* x 6 (GCS 21, 128, 17–19) says that Eunomius’ face was scarred and blotched with “white leprosy” (ἀλφός), and Rufinus, *HE* x 26 (*Eusebius Werke* 11/2, GCS NF 6/2, 989, 26) calls him *leprosus*.

50 *Lev* 13,46; *Num* 5,3.

On what grounds then and based on what facts does he convict him of violence and impetuosity? 105. "Because," says he, "he called me a Galatian when I am a Cappadocian." If then instead of Oltiserian he | called him a Galatian, 58 when he actually lived on the boundary of the territories in a nameless remote part of Corniaspa (if indeed | he can be shown to have used this name at all; 284M I have not found it added in our copies of the books, but nevertheless let us grant it was stated), is it for this he is called "impetuous" and "violent" and "liar" and all those dreadful things? 106. The wise fellow does not understand that an allegation by the prosecutor based on trifles provides strong evidence of the good standing of the accused; otherwise, once stirred to bring the accusation, he would not pass over bigger things and concentrate his malice on the smaller. Where these are concerned he actively inflates and magnifies the horror of the fault and solemnly philosophizes about falsehood, judging it equally wrong, whether the argument concerns larger matters or smaller. 107. He knew in the manner of the fathers of his heresy, that is to say the scribes and Pharisees, how to strain out the gnat meticulously while unreservedly swallowing the bent camel burdened with the weight of vice.⁵¹ It would not perhaps be wrong to say to him, "In our society spare us such legislation, that which bids us reckon it pointless to distinguish the blame for lying according to whether matters are large or small". 108. Paul does not sin in the same way, when he tells a lie | and goes through Jewish sanctification at the appointed time for 59 those beneficially deceived,⁵² as does Judas, when he puts on an appearance of friendly conversation at the time of the betrayal.⁵³ Joseph also lied when he benevolently tricked his brothers, even though he swore by the health of Pharaoh.⁵⁴ But his brothers lied too, when out of envy they plotted first his death, and later his enslavement.⁵⁵ There are many such things that could be mentioned. Sarah lies from embarrassment over her laugh;⁵⁶ and the serpent lies too when he suggests that man will be changed into a divine being through disobedience.⁵⁷ 109. So the difference between lies, depending on the purpose, is great and it is impossible to say how great, whether you test the case by reference to the ancient stories or to present life. Let us therefore also accept that in accordance with the general sentence upon all men which the Holy Spirit

⁵¹ *Mt* 23,24.

⁵² *Acts* 21,26.

⁵³ *Mt* 27,49.

⁵⁴ *Gen* 42,14.

⁵⁵ *Gen* 37,18.27.

⁵⁶ *Gen* 18,15.

⁵⁷ *Gen* 3,5.

pronounced through the prophet, “Every man is a liar,”⁵⁸ and that the man of God also fell into lying, when by ignorance or oversight about the name of the place he accidentally referred to the neighbouring country. But Eunomius lied too. What was his lie?—redrafting truth itself. 110. He says that the one who always is, at one time is not; he argues that the one who is truly son has that title as a pseudonym; he decides that the creator of all is himself a creature and a made thing; he names the one who is master of the universe a slave; he aligns the one who by nature possesses sovereignty with what is naturally servile. Is the difference the lie makes a small one, and such that one would think it did not matter whether someone appeared to lie in the one way or the other?

XI 111–118. The sophistry about the prize, which he uses to argue that we admit he faced trial and did not compose his Defence without being accused, is feeble⁵⁹

60 111. | Eunomius also taunts others for “sophistic argument”, and observe what
285M care he takes over valid demonstration. Our teacher said in his work against him that at the time when | events came to a head this man “carried off Cyzicus as a prize for irreligion”.⁶⁰ 112. What then does the critic of sophists do? He at once seizes on the word “prize” and claims that it is conceded by us that he both made his defence and won the action through his defence and through the trials gained the prize of victory, and he composes a syllogism, bringing the argument, he supposes, to an irrefutable conclusion. The words he wrote shall be quoted verbatim: “For if,” he says, “the prize is the token and fulfilment of victory, and victory indicates the verdict; and the verdict certainly implies the accusation, then the one who awards the prize will be saying that of necessity the defence must also exist.”

113. What then do we reply? We do not deny he fought this dire battle for irreligion with great intensity and vigour, and that he in no small measure overtopped his rivals and excelled in perspiring efforts against the truth, though he did not gain the tokens of victory over his opponents; but also that in comparison with his fellow-runners on the way through irreligion to error he is ahead of all in his abundance of falsehood, and so took Cyzicus as a prize for

⁵⁸ Ps 115,2/116,11.

⁵⁹ Winling puts the heading here, the MSS one sentence later.

⁶⁰ Basil, *CE* I 2 (SC 299, 156). The complicated history of Eunomius’ appointment as bishop of Cyzicus in 360 is documented in the writers of ecclesiastical history. For recent study see R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 228–233.

excellence in evil, as | being superior to all who similarly dusted themselves 61
 for the fight against truth, and that for his victory in the cause of blasphemy
 it was announced in a clear and splendid proclamation that Cyzicus had been
 awarded to him as a prize for vice by the sponsors of such contests. 114. That
 all these things are conceded by us in the sense stated is clear from our book,
 for we say that Cyzicus became his as a prize for irreligion, not as justifying a
 defence. What have the things we said in common with that childish sequence
 of sophistries, such as to confirm that his case and his defence are sustained?
 It would be rather as if someone at a drinking party filled his cup with more
 neat drink than the rest and for that was awarded some prize by his fellow-
 drunkards, and then used his victory in the drinking bout to prove that he had
 also taken his case to law and had won his suit. 115. He too would be able to imi-
 tate the sequence of this syllogism: "If the prize is the token and fulfilment of
 victory, and victory indicates the verdict, and the verdict certainly implies the
 accusation, then I have won the verdict, since I was crowned while drinking at
 the drinking bout."

116. But someone will surely say to one who plays that game, "Trials at law 62
 are one thing, drinking competitions quite another. The one who wins at | the
 winecup is in no way superior because of such a victory to those opposed to him
 at law, though he may glory in his flowery crowns." No more therefore does the
 one who leads his rivals in expounding irreligion provide immediate evidence
 through the prize for impiety that he has also won the legal judgment. 117. What
 support then to the undelivered defence is our testimony that he excels in irrelig-
 ion? If he had delivered his defence to the judges and | defeated his opponents, 288M
 and thus received the honour of Cyzicus, he would have occasion to deploy our
 words against us. But if he constantly avers in his work that to evade the malice
 of those giving the verdict he accepts in silence the punishment imposed on
 him, because he could not bear to have the contests arranged among enemies,
 why does he cheat and exploit the word "prize" as evidence that he delivered
 the defence?—it is amazing that he does not understand the meaning of the
 "prize," that it was as an award and winning honour to him for excellence in
 irreligion that "he was offered a drink of Cyzicus."⁶¹ 118. But since he accepts the
 prize as to his credit and as a gift to honour a victory, let him accept also what is
 attached to it in the argument, that it was in irreligion that he won superiority
 and victory. Since he insists on using our words against us, it would be fair if he
 would use either both points or neither.

61 This joke from Demosthenes was already used by Basil in another connexion in *CE* I 2; see Jaeger and Winling ad loc.

XII 119–146. It is nonsense to taunt with cowardice one who displayed such courage in disputes with emperors and officials

63 119. That is how Eunomius deals with our words. In the | rest of his insulting remarks will he be shown to be saying anything true? Among them he details against him “cowardly”, “timid”, “shirking hard work” and all that sort of thing, industriously expounding the cowardly character, a “secret chamber” and a “door tight shut” and “scared at the thought of intruders” and “voice” and “look” and “the signs on his face” and all that sort of thing, by which the character of cowardice is indicated. 120. But even if he had been caught telling no other lies, it would be enough to prove him wrong in this particular practice. Who does not know how that great warrior, at the time when the Emperor Valens was in conflict with the churches of the Lord, rose with naturally noble determination above so great a burden of business and overtopped frightening men, his purpose elevated above every alarm contrived against him? 121. Which of the people of the east, which of those living at the extremities of our world, did not know his battle with the rulers for the truth? Who was not alarmed when he beheld the adversary? 122. He was no ordinary person,⁶² nor did he acquire his power to conquer by bogus syllogisms, where winning brings no credit and defeat no loss, but he had under him in its time of prosperity the
64 entire Roman Empire. | Flaunting such great royal power he had been seized by the slander against our doctrine, Eudoxius of Germanicia⁶³ having by deceit attached him to himself. All the officials and his circle of attendants and those who shared imperial power he had as supporters in his own policy; some of them had willingly inclined to him because they shared his view, but the majority of them readily conceded what he wanted through fear of imperial power, and demonstrated their support for him through severity towards those who clung to sound faith. 123. When persecutions, confiscations and banishments, threats and surcharge fines, legal perils, surveillances, imprisonments, floggings and all conceivable horrors were being effected against those who did not align
289M themselves with the Emperor’s | policy; when it was harder to catch the truly religious in the house of God than to convict them on the basest of charges; 124.—but to survey all those events one by one would require a big book and much time and special study, especially when, with the evils of that period apparent to all, there would be nothing to gain for the purposes of our present

62 Valens acceded to power over the eastern part of the Roman Empire in 364.

63 Eudoxius was the greatest of the anti-Nicene bishops, first at Antioch, and from 360 onwards at Constantinople.

work from setting out in detail those disasters affecting public affairs. There is also a further embarrassment about describing them, which is that we would be obliged to mention our own actions in a thorough account of that tale of sorrows.⁶⁴ 125. If anything was done by us on account of the struggles for true religion such as might bring credit in the telling, | Wisdom bids leave it to our neighbours: “For let the next man speak your praise”, she says, “and not your own lips.”⁶⁵ That was something our ever-circumspect friend ignored when he devoted the greater part of his book to inflated accounts of himself. 65

126. Passing all such matters by, then, I shall set out in detail the cowardly acts of our teacher. The one opposed to him in the role of antagonist was the Emperor himself, his assistant in his efforts was the one who next to him governed the whole empire,⁶⁶ and his colleagues in seeking such an end were all those around him. 127. To these should be added also the occasion, if we are accurately to evaluate and demonstrate the noble valour of the athlete. What was the occasion? The Emperor drove eastward from Constantinople, his spirit lifted by his recent successes against the barbarians,⁶⁷ and expecting none to oppose his efforts. Ahead of him on his route went the prefect, whose task, instead of other measures necessary for the Empire, was to make sure that none of those attached to the faith should remain in his place, but that these should all be driven away from wherever they were, and other self-appointed persons be substituted for them in defiance of the divine institution. 128. With such intent the imperial authority descended like a heavy cloud from Propon-tis upon the churches. Bithynia was at once devastated. Galatia was quite easily swept away, and everyone had meanwhile yielded to them as they intended. | 66
Our district was now at the forefront in the sequence of evil. 129. What then of great Basil, the “cowardly”, as Eunomius says, and “timid” and “alarmed at terrors” and “entrusting his safety to a secret chamber”? Did he flinch at the onset of evil? Did he treat the fate of those already overthrown as a warrant for making his own position safe? Did he listen to those who advised him to bend a little before the flood of evil and not expose himself to obvious danger with men well used to bloodshed? Or does all extreme language, every highflown thought and word, | fall demonstrably short of the truth? 130. How could one express in words such a great contempt of terrors? How could one bring to view 292M

64 Gregory was himself deposed from his see in 375 by a council of hostile bishops, who were led by the prefect Demosthenes.

65 *Pr* 27,2.

66 The prefect Fl. Domitianus Modestus led the campaign to impose the official (homoean) creed upon the churches.

67 The campaign against the Goths and its victorious settlement, 369–370.

that unprecedented conflict, which one might rightly say could be fought neither by men nor against men, but only the courage and boldness of a Christian could sustain against murderous imperial power?

131. The summons to his presence was issued, in virtue of imperial authority he had already received, by the officer who had made the Empire, which was already terrifying because of its size, more terrifying still by the ruthlessness of his punishments. After those tragic events which he had brought about among the Bithynians, and when the Galatians had with their usual acquiescence surrendered without resistance, he thought that our district also was
 67 ready to come round to what he expected. 132. | The initial act of severity was the speech in which threats and promises were mixed together. To the obedient he held out imperial favour and government of the church, but to the obstructive all that bitterness of soul is able to suggest when it has taken power to itself. Such was their part. 133. Our leader⁶⁸ was so far from becoming alarmed at what was seen and said, that like some physician or good counsellor called in to put right what had been done wrong, he enjoined them to repent of their previous outrages and to desist hereafter from their murderous attitudes to the servants of the Lord. Their design, he said could bring them no advantage in the case of those whose religion was solely the kingdom of God and the immortal power. 134. Those who, wished to harm them could find neither word nor act of such a kind as would hurt the Christian. Confiscation, he said, will not touch one whose sole possession is faith. Exile will not frighten one who treads the whole the earth with the same mind and who regards it all as foreign because he is a temporary resident, and all as his own because all creation is alike at his service. 135. To be subjected to blows or pains or death, whenever it is possible for truth's sake, presents no terror even to women, but to all Christians it is the supreme measure of happiness to suffer something irreparable for this hope. His only regret was, he said, that there is in nature only one death, and he found no device whereby he might fight for truth with many deaths.

68 136. While he thus | raised himself up to meet those threats and ignored as contemptible the whole weight of that imperial authority, just as when masks are changed on the stage one set instantly replaces another, just so was the harshness of the threats suddenly transformed into flattery. The one whose attitude had been hard and alarming changed and said in quiet and subdued terms, "Do not for your part regard it as a small matter for the great Emperor
 293M to be associated with your people, but allow yourself to be | called his teacher

68 Jaeger ad loc. notes the very similar account of Basil's response to persecution in Gregory, *Bas* (GNO X/1, 116).

too, and do not thwart his will. And he is willing that this should happen with the deletion only of one small thing written in the creed, the word ‘consubstantial’ (*homoousios*).⁶⁹ 137. To this the teacher replied that for the Emperor to be a member of the church is a very important matter; it was important, he said, that he should save his soul, not because it was an emperor’s, but just because it was a man’s. But as to the creed, so far was he from making any subtraction or addition, that he would not even change the order of its words. 138. That is how “the cowardly and unmanly, who was scared at the sound of the door”, answered in words one of such high rank, and confirmed his answer by his deeds. He personally stopped the destruction which was then by imperial actions overwhelming the churches like a flood, and turned it back, by himself warding off the assault of evil, like some great unshakable rock in the sea faced with a great and massive wave, shattering upon himself the assault of terrors.

139. But his struggles did not stop there. The Emperor himself took over the next attempt, irritated because his desires had not been accomplished at the first assault. So just as | once the Assyrian used the butcher Nabuzaradan at Jerusalem to accomplish the destruction of the Israelites’ temple,⁷⁰ so he also thought that, having appointed to such an office one Demosthenes, the head baker and chief butcher, as being keener than the rest, he would succeed in his whole undertaking. 140. As this man was stirring the whole mixture, and one of God’s enemies from Illyria held a little tablet in his hand and was gathering for the purpose all those in office, and had inflamed their anger again to a fiercer pitch than the former effort of Modestus,⁷¹ all were together moved to the same anger as the Emperor, sharing the indignation of his displeasure and trying to appease the wrath of the authorities, while everyone was already prostrate through fear of what was expected. 141. Once more there was that prefect, once more onslaughts more intense than the first, additional threats, fiercer anger and the ceremony of lawcourts, heralds, prosecuting counsel, lictors, lattice-gates, curtains, by which the minds even of the well-prepared are easily frightened; and once more there was the athlete of God at the second round of the conflict exceeding even the glory he won in the first. 142. If you seek proofs of this, look at the facts. What place did the destruction of churches at that time not reach? What country remained untouched by the assault of heretics? Which of the famous men in the churches was not thrown out of his work?

69

69 It should not be assumed that the whole of the Nicene Creed of AD 325 was in use in Basil’s church. A traditional local creed could be called “Nicene” if the one word “consubstantial” were added to it.

70 2 *Kgs* / 4 *Kgdms* 25,8–21.

71 See §§ 128–130 above.

What laity escaped such ill-treatment? **143.** Not all Syria and Mesopotamia as far as the barbarian frontier, not Phoenicia, Palestine and Arabia, Egypt and the
 70 | tribes of Libya to the limit of our civilization, not what lies in the direction
 296M of the Pontians, Cilicians, Lycians, Pisidians, Pamphylans, Carians, Hellespontians, | and Islanders as far as the Propontis itself, not the parts towards Thrace, whether it was Thrace and the tribes round it or in the direction of the Ister itself. Which of all these remained undisturbed, except any that were already in the grip of such evil? Among them all the population of Cappadocia alone was untouched by the calamity to the churches, because our great champion rescued it in the times of trial.

144. These were the results of the “cowardice” of our teacher. These were the achievements of the one “who was scared of hard work”, not of one who was highly esteemed among wretched old hags, nor one who practised deceit upon weak women who are easy to deceive, nor one who reckoned it a great thing to be admired by the condemned and corrupted, but of one who by his works showed his strength of soul and the steadfastness, courage and nobility of his mind. **145.** His achievement was the saving of the whole country, peace to the church in our region, an example of everything good to those who live virtuously, the defeat of its opposite, testimony to the faith, security for the weak, reassurance to the bold, everything that by common consent the better part requires. **146.** In these accounts alone the hearing and seeing of the events combine. It is the same thing to tell of good deeds in word and to show the evidence
 71 for them in deed, and | to confirm each by the other: the memory from what is visible and the events through what is said.

XIII 147–154. An account of his doctrinal statement and a detailed critique of the statement⁷²

147. However, I am not sure how our argument has somehow strayed outside its subject, having been diverted into the particular offensive attacks of the accuser. Yet it is considerably to Eunomius’ advantage that the discussion has dwelt on such things and has been prevented by the debate about human misdemeanours from going on to matters of greater moment. **148.** So just as it is futile in the case of one on trial for murder to accuse him of abusive language—it is enough that one proof of murder should attract the death sentence, even

⁷² The heading plainly belongs here, where Winling and one MS mark it. Other MSS put it at § 127.

if no abusive language is demonstrated against the murderer—, in the same way I think it would be right to bring to trial only his irreligion, and not bother with his reproaches against us. It is clear that, if he is found guilty of wickedness over the greatest and most momentous matters, he will by implication be convicted at the same time of all the rest, even if we do not go closely into the details. 149. The chief point then in the case he has prepared is slander against the doctrine of true religion both in the former book and in the one now being refuted by us, and all the effort to destroy and cancel and thoroughly to pervert the religious concepts of the Onlybegotten God and the Holy Spirit. 150. So that his case against the doctrines of truth may be clearly proven false and unsustainable, I shall first present verbatim his account of these subjects, and then I shall return to his statements, examining each of them separately.

151. | “The whole | statement of our doctrines comprises the highest and most authentic being. The one which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over all the rest, and a third which is in no way aligned with them, but subject to the one because of causation and to the other because of the activity by which it exists; the activities which accompany the beings and the names appropriate to them being of course treated together for the comprehensive statement of the whole doctrine. 152. Yet again, since each of these beings both is and is perceived to be absolutely simple and altogether singular in its own rank, and since the activities are defined at the same time as their works, and the works match the activities of those who effected them, there is surely every necessity both that the activities accompanying each of the beings are lesser end greater, and that some occupy the first and others the second rank, and in sum that they reach the same degree of difference as their works reach. 153. For it would not be right to speak of the same activity by which he made the angels, or the stars and heaven, or man; but just as works may be senior to and more honourable than other works, in the same degree also one of a truly religious mind would say that one activity excels another, inasmuch as the same activities | produce identical works, and varied works reveal varied activities. 154. Since these are such and in their relation to each other preserve the bond invariable, it is surely right that those who conduct their investigation in accordance with the order inherent in the realities and do not insist on mixing and confusing everything together, if any dispute should arise about the beings, should base their belief about what is being demonstrated and the resolution of disputed points on the primary activities peculiar to the beings, and to resolve any doubt about the activities with reference to the beings, and to reckon it surely more fitting and more effective in all respects to descend from primary to secondary things.”

297M
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XIV 155–160. He was wrong in giving an account of the saving doctrine not to name Father and Son and Holy Spirit as is traditional, but to use other names of his own choice⁷³

155. This then is the system of his blasphemy. May the true God the Son of the true God by the guiding of the Holy Spirit direct our words towards the truth. Let us take up the words again in order. He says that the whole statement of his doctrines comprises the highest and most authentic being, the one which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over all the rest, and a third, he says, which is in no way aligned with them but subject to the one because of causation and to the other because of the activity. 156. | This then is the first of the villainies in the book, that after promising to set forth for us mystic doctrine, as if he were correcting the gospel words, he uses not those titles through which the Lord communicated the mystery in the perfection of faith, but he | passes over in silence the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,⁷⁴ and instead of “Father” he speaks of some “highest and most authentic being,” instead of “the Son”, of “one which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over the rest”, and instead of “the Holy Spirit” of the one “which is in no way aligned with them but subject to them both.” 157. Yet surely if it were more accurate to speak like that, Truth would surely not have been unable to discover these expressions, nor surely would all those who subsequently received the proclamation of the mystery, all those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and servants of the word⁷⁵ and those who after them filled the whole civilized world with gospel doctrines, 158. nor yet would those who later at certain times debated in general council disputed points of doctrine which had been raised, written records of which are permanently preserved in the churches. If it had been necessary to use these terms, they would not have referred to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, if it had been at all pious or safe to alter the text of the creed in this new direction. Or were they all ignorant and uninstructed in the mysteries and had not heard of what this man calls “the names belonging to them”—those who never knew nor desired | to advance their own ideas in preference to the names transmitted to us by the divine voice? 159. But I think the reason for this new invention of names is obvious to everybody: all men when they hear the titles “father” and “son” immediately recognize from the very names their intimate and natural

73 Winling puts this heading before §156, following the MSS.

74 *Mt* 28,19.

75 *Lk* 1,2.

relation to each other. Community of nature is inevitably suggested by these titles. 160. So it is to avoid these concepts of the true Father and the Onlybegotten Son that he stealthily deprives his hearers of the sense of intimacy which the names bring in with them, and forsaking the inspired words he uses those coined for ruining the truth to express his statement of doctrine.

xv 161–189. He was wrong when he called the being of the Father alone “most authentic and highest”, implying by silence that the being of the Son and of the Spirit is inauthentic and low⁷⁶

161. He rightly says that it is not the universal doctrines of the church which the statement comprises in these terms, but his own. It is easy for any intelligent person to understand the irreligion of the expressions. It is still perhaps opportune to enquire particularly in our study with what purpose he attributes “highest and most authentic” only to the being of the Father, allowing the being of neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit to be high and authentic. 162. In my opinion this care to reject altogether the Onlybegotten and the Spirit where being is concerned, and to argue this imperceptibly through such a systematic arrangement, may appear to be only a matter of names; but the true confession of their personal existence (*hypostasis*) is set aside by this argument. That this is the case can be understood without difficulty by a little further application to the text. 163. The one who thinks correctly | that the Onlybegotten and the | Holy Spirit exist in their proper *hypostasis* is not concerned to quibble over the confession of the titles by which he thinks he ought to reverence the God over all. It would surely be extremely silly, when the facts are agreed, to fuss about words. But as it is, by attributing “highest and most authentic” only to the Father’s being he has led us to surmise from his silence about the others that they have no authentic reality. 164. For how can one say that something truly is, when authentic being is not attributed to it? Inevitably those things to which “authentic” does not apply must be compatible with titles of opposite sense. What is not authentic is just inauthentic, and thus the argument that something does not authentically exist becomes a proof of absolute unreality. Eunomius appears to have had this in mind when he invented these new titles in his doctrine. 165. No one is going to say that it was through inexperience that he slipped into an unintended meaning and by spatial error separated high from low, and that confining the Father to some hilly peak he settled the Son in

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301M

⁷⁶ Winling has the heading here, the MSS in the middle of § 161.

the lowlands. 166. No one is such a child in understanding that he would apply concepts of spatial difference to intellectual and incorporeal nature. Position in space is proper to bodies, whereas what is by nature intellectual and immaterial is considered to be far removed from spatial concepts. For what reason then is the being of the Father alone said to be “highest”? It would not be easy to suggest that he drifted into these ideas through some sort of ignorance, when he pretends in many of the things he displays to be wise, and does what divine scripture forbids, affecting wisdom over much.⁷⁷

77 167. | He may nevertheless say that height of being still does not indicate superiority either in power or in goodness or in anything of that kind. For surely everyone knows, except those who presume to superior wisdom, that the personal being (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten and that of the Holy Spirit are indefectibly perfect in goodness and power and all such things. 168. For all good things, as long as they do not admit their opposite, have no limit to their goodness, since they are naturally circumscribed only by what is opposite to them, as can be seen from individual examples. Strength stops when weakness takes hold, life is limited by death, light’s boundary is darkness, and all in all individual good things cease where they meet their opposites. 169. If then he supposes the nature of the Onlybegotten and the Spirit can be changed for the worse, he is right to reduce the concept of their goodness, since they can coincide with the opposite as well. But if the divine and immutable nature is irreconcilable with what is worse—and that is something granted even by our enemies—then it is perceived as altogether unlimited in goodness, and unlimited is the same as infinite. But to apply concepts of greater and less to the infinite and
304M unlimited is utterly absurd. For how could | the thought of infinity be retained, if greater and less are ascribed to it? 170. We ascertain the greater by comparing the edges with each other; where there is no edge, how would it be possible to envisage the difference? 171. Or is it by conceiving not this but some temporal preeminence, that he attributes something greater in terms of the seniority
78 due to age, and therefore | says that only the Father’s being is highest? Then let him say by what he has measured the additional part of the Father’s life, if no temporal difference has already been postulated for the existence (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten?

172. If however this were the case—let it be stated hypothetically for the moment—, why should the being which is prior in time to the one generated later have more of what it is to “be” (I use the term “be”, because he does), so that the one is called “highest and authentic”, while the other is not? Length

77 Eccl 7,16.

of life distinguishes the older from the younger, but being has neither greater nor less because of this. 173. This also will become clearer with illustrations. What less did David have than Abraham in terms of being, because he was signified as fourteen generations later?⁷⁸ Was there some change in humanity in his case, and was he less a man, because born later in time? Who would be so stupid as to say that? 174. The concept of being is identical in both cases, and is in no way changed with the passing of time. Nor would anyone say that the one is more a man because he preceded in time, while the other participates less in that nature because he lived his life after others, as if human nature were spent by those predecessors, or time had used up power in those who went before. 175. Neither is it possible to define the limits of nature in temporal terms, but it abides in itself and preserves itself through all posterity. But time passes in its own way, whether it contains or bypasses nature, which remains fixed and unchanged in its own defined limits. 176. So even if | advantage were to be allowed to length of time, as the argument assumed, they would not be able validly to attribute the highest rank of being to the Father alone. But since no superiority based on seniority in time exists—for how could such a thing be conceived in the case of preeternal nature, when all measurable differences are inferior to divine nature?—what argument remains for those who endeavour to split the pretemporal and incomprehensible being by distinguishing high from low?

79

177. There is no gainsaying the argument that their doctrinal proposal supports Jewish doctrine, | when they prove that only the being of the Father subsists, the only one which they affirm authentically is, while they reckon that of the Son and Spirit among those that do not exist. 178. Anything that does not authentically exist may be said to exist only in a manner of speaking and in imprecise practice, just as the name of a man is not applied to the pictorial representation in the portrait, but to the one authentically so called. The latter is not a likeness of the man, but the model on which the likeness is based. The portrait is a man in name only, and for that reason is not authentically called what it is called, because the name does not correspond to the reality. 179. In this case therefore, if the Father's being is authentically so called, but that of the Son and Spirit never are, surely that is an obvious denial of the saving proclamation? So let them turn back again from the church to the synagogues of the Jews, since by not according authentic existence to the Son they argue that he does not exist at all; the inauthentic is the same as the nonexistent.

305M

78 Mt 1,17.

180. But since he likes being wise in such things, and spits on those who without logical skill try their hand at writing, let him tell us, whom he despises, by what | wisdom he learnt the greater and lesser degrees of being.⁷⁹ 181. What reasoning produces a difference of such a kind that one being exists more than another being? I refer specifically to the meaning of “being”; he should not bring forward differences of qualities or of characteristics, such as are apprehended by the intelligent mind in connexion with the being, which are something other than the subject itself. 182. It is not differences of scents, colours, weight, potency, value or behaviour and habit, or whatever else is observed about body and soul, that are the object of our present enquiry. I am discussing the subject itself, to which the term “being” is properly applied, and whether it is distinguished from another being by any greater degree of being. I have never yet heard a case where of two things, both of which are agreed to exist, as long as they both exist, one exists more than the other. Each of them alike exists, while it exists and because it exists, to the exclusion, as has been said, of considerations of relative value or sufficiency.

183. If then he does not grant that the Onlybegotten is in being at all (which is the point to which his argument seems inadvertently to have slid), the one who does not grant him authentic being ought not to concede lesser being either. But if he allows that the Son does somehow sustain the capacity for being (we have not yet come to controversy about that), why does he take away again what he has just given from the one who was allowed to be, arguing that he does not “authentically” exist, which is the equivalent, as has been said, of not existing at all? 184. Just as it is not possible for something to be human, if the meaning of the term does not entirely apply to it, and where something lacks some of the characteristics | it forfeits all claim to be called human, so also in the case of something, which is alleged to exist incompletely or inauthentically, the partial concession of being provides no evidence of existence, | but the argument for incomplete being argues the absolute annihilation of the subject. 185. So if he is wise, let him change to the orthodox view, by eliminating from his doctrine the concepts of “less” and “inauthentic” as applied to the being of the Son and Holy Spirit. 186. But if he is altogether bent on impiety, I certainly do not know for what reason he also wishes to repay his Creator and God and Benefactor with slander. He should at least forfeit his claim to be of any standing where culture is concerned, since he ignorantly puts one being above another, declares one to be high and the other low on some undiscovered scale, and

79 Jaeger notes a possible reference here to Aristotle, *cat.* 3b33, denying differences of more or less between beings.

attributes authenticity to the one and not to the other. Neither do we know any of the philosophers outside the faith who have made this mad statement, nor does such a thing agree with either the divinely inspired texts or common sense.

187. The purpose of these significant terms has, I think, been sufficiently revealed by our discussion: these expressions are laid down at the outset as a springboard and foundation for his whole doctrinal malpractice, in order that, having argued for belief in only the one “highest and most authentic” being, he may easily impugn the others as being considered low and not authentic.

188. He shows this most of all in what follows, where in describing his opinions about the Son and the Holy Spirit he does not touch upon these titles, so as not, as I said before, by these designations | unintentionally to put forward 82 their intimate community of nature; rather he refers to them without names, as he lays it down that the minds of the hearers must be led on by the “names and words belonging.”⁸⁰

189. Yet what name could belong more than the one given by Truth itself? But he sets his doctrine against the gospels, naming, not the Son, but the “one which exists because of that being, and after that being has supremacy over all the rest.”⁸¹ That this is said to get rid of the pious concept of the Onlybegotten, will become clearer from the remainder of his argument.

XVI 190–204. An examination of the meaning of “subjection”, whereby he alleges that the essential nature of the Holy Spirit is subjected to the being of the Father and the Son, in which it is argued that the Spirit is coordinated with the Father and the Son, not subjected⁸²

190. Since the terms used appear to be moderate, so that someone saying nothing impious about Christ might occasionally use these terms, I will myself also now pass over what is said about the Lord, reserving my refutation for his more obvious slanders against him; but in the case of the Holy Spirit he utters such open and undisguised slander, saying that he is not aligned with Father and Son, but “subjected” to both, that, so far as I am able, I will examine the argument.

191. Let us first observe the meaning of subjection, and the uses to which divine scripture puts such an expression. Honouring man for having been made

80 Quoting imprecisely from § 151 above.

81 Still quoting § 151.

82 Winling puts the heading here, the MSS have it in the middle of § 190.

309M in the image of the creator, | the God who created him subjected to him all irrational nature,⁸³ as great David cried out while recounting this favour in hymns. 192. "For he subjected all things," he says, "beneath his feet," and mentions by name the things subjected.⁸⁴ There is also another meaning of subjection in 83 the divine scripture. | In attributing his successes in the wars to the God of the universe himself he says, "He subjected peoples to us, and nations under our feet;"⁸⁵ and again, "He makes peoples subject to me."⁸⁶ 193. This expression is frequently to be found in the divine scriptures indicating the defeat of opponents. The passage in the Apostle about the future subjection of all mankind to the Onlybegotten and through him to the Father, in which in his deep wisdom he says that the Mediator of God and men is himself subjected to the Father,⁸⁷ hinting at the obedience of all mankind through the subjection to the Father of the Son who has shared in manhood, I shall for the present defer as requiring fuller and more detailed treatment.⁸⁸ 194. But in the obvious cases, where the meaning of subjection admits no ambiguity, in what sense can it be shown that the being of the Spirit is subject to that of the Son and the Father? As the Son is being subjected to the Father, in the Apostle's thought? 195. Surely in this respect the Spirit is aligned with the Son, not subjected to him, if the two persons are both subjected? Or is that wrong? Then how else? Is it as we learn in the Psalm that irrational nature is subjected to rational? Then the Spirit differs as much as that of beasts does from man. But perhaps he rules out that account 84 too. Then he will come to the remaining choice, | that having been formerly opposed and resistant, the Spirit was subsequently forced by superior power to submit to the conqueror? 196. Let him select which he likes of the choices stated. But I do not know which of these choices will enable him to escape the inevitable conviction for blasphemy, whether he says that the Spirit is subject in the same way as the irrational things, as the fish and fowl and cattle are to man, or whether on the analogy of the rebels he leads him as a prisoner of the one who has forcefully overcome him.

197. Perhaps he will say that it is none of these, and that he did not use the expression about subjection in the scriptural meaning, but that he says the Spirit is subjected to the Father and the Son in some other sense. What then

83 Cf. *Gen* 1,27–28.

84 *Ps* 8,6–8.

85 *Ps* 46,4/47,3.

86 *Ps* 17,48/18,47; 143/144,2.

87 *1 Cor* 15,28.

88 Gregory addresses this problematic text in a later booklet, *In illud: tunc et ipse filius*. See the full edition of J. Kenneth Dowling in GNO III/2.

is this sense? Is it because he was third in the order which was passed on by the Lord to his disciples,⁸⁹ that he lays it down that he is subjected and not aligned equally? 198. Then he must also on the same principle subject the Father to the Onlybegotten, because divine scripture often gives precedence to the name of the Lord before it refers in second place to the God over all. "I and the Father," says the Lord,⁹⁰ giving himself precedence; 199. and "The grace of | our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God,"⁹¹ and thousands of similar cases are available for collection by the scrupulous hunter of scriptural testimonies. Here is one of them: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of services, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of inspirations, but the same God."⁹² So on this principle | the God over all should be subjected to the Son and the Spirit, since he is mentioned in third place by Paul. 200. But we have never before heard this philosophy, which reduces the second and third item mentioned in a sequence to the position of subordinate and subject, which is what Eunomius wants to do, if he argues that the traditional sequence of the persons indicates superiorities and inferiorities of ranks and natures. 201. For he makes it a rule that the sequential order is an indication of difference between the natures, having somehow or other dreamed up such things, and by some compulsion or other arriving at this conclusion. Numerical order does not bring about diversity of the natures, but the numbered items, whatever their nature is, remain what they are, whether they are numbered or not. 202. The number is a sign to make it known how many things are; it certainly does not relegate into second place things that are inferior in natural ranking, but at the discretion of those who do the counting it lists the items which are indicated by the sum. "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy":⁹³ when three persons were there mentioned at the discretion of the one who mentioned them, did the numbering indicate that Silvanus, who was put in second place after Paul, was anything other than a man? 203. Or was Timothy, who was put third, | thus regarded as different in nature by the sequence in which his name occurs? It cannot be so. Each of these is a man both before the numbering and afterwards; because it was impossible to indicate all three in one word at the same time, the text mentions each one separately in the chosen order, but connects the names with conjunctions between, in order, I suppose, to indicate the unanimity of all three by connecting the names. 204. But this does not satisfy the new

89 *Mt* 28,19.

90 *Jn* 10,30.

91 *2Cor* 13,13.

92 *1Cor* 12,4.

93 *1Thes* 1,1.

dogmatician; he sets his decree against what the divine voice appoints, and having excluded the one aligned by the Lord himself with Father and Son from his proper and natural rank and connexion, he counted him among the things subjected and says he is the work of both,—of the Father, inasmuch as he supplied the cause of his existence, and of the Onlybegotten, inasmuch as he devised his personal being (*hypostasis*),—and this he decides is the reason for his subjection, though he has not yet revealed what subjection means.

XVII 205–222. Examination of activities to see which are those natural ones, which Eunomius says accompany the being of the Father and the Son

313M 205. Eunomius continues: “the activities which accompany the beings and the | names appropriate to them being of course treated together.”⁹⁴ The meaning of these words is not at all easy to perceive, being shrouded in a thick cloud of obscurity. But one might hazard a guess that it means something like this: 206. He applies the terms “activities of beings”, I assume, to the powers effective of the Son and the Holy Spirit, by which the first being produced the second and the second the third, and he says that the names of the works effected are simultaneously generated as “appropriate to” the works. We have however already
87 investigated so far as we were able the trick with the names, and when | we reach that part of our investigation, if the argument requires, we shall put it forward again.

207. For the time being it is worth considering how the activities “accompany” the beings, and what they are in their own nature, whether something other than the beings they accompany, or part of them and of the same nature; and if they are something else, how or whence they originate, and if they are the same thing, how they come to be cut off and, instead of “coexisting” with them, “accompany” them externally. 208. It is not even possible straightforwardly to find out from the words used whether he means that some natural necessity compels the activity, whatever that is, to accompany the being without any free choice, as combustion accompanies fire and scents and odours the substances from which they derive,—though I do not think he would say that, since he would then consider the being of God to be something complex and composite, having the activity as inseparable and simultaneously contemplated with itself,

94 §151 above.

as a property⁹⁵ manifests itself in a subject. Rather he says that the beings are deliberately and voluntarily moved of themselves to effect what they decide. 209. And who would say that something which owes its existence to deliberate purpose “accompanies” like an external consequence? We do not know of the expression being used in common speech for this kind of thing, so that one would say that the activity of one who works at something follows the worker about. Nor is it possible to detach the one thing from the other and conceive the remaining one by itself, but the | one who speaks of the activity comprehends in the word whatever is active in it, and the one who mentions the agent, 88 surely also indicates the activity.

210. What is meant will become clearer with examples. We say that a person is active at metalwork or building or something like that. Language uses one word to describe at the same time both the work and him who practises the craft, so that if one of them were removed, the remaining one would not exist. 211. So if the two are conceived together, the activity itself and the one who performs the action, how in Eunomius’ statement can the activity which produces the second being be said to “accompany” the first being, since it stands by itself half-way between the two, and neither coincides with the first in nature nor closely attached to the second? It is separate from the first, inasmuch as it is not a subsistent being (*physis*) but the motion of a subsistent being, and it does not coincide with the second, inasmuch as it has in itself constituted not mere activity but an active being.

212. | Let us now take the enquiry on to the next point. When he calls one 316M being the “work” of another—the second of the first, and the third of the second—, how does he first demonstrate his case? What arguments does he use for this? By what logic does he constrain us to the necessity of believing that the subsequent exists by the activity of what precedes? 213. If one were bound to draw analogies from the rest of what is observed in creation for these subjects as well, it would still not be right to make guesses based on lower things about the transcendent; yet the argument might perhaps be pardonable, as being misled in incomprehensibles by things visible. But in this case, who would be prepared to say that the sky is God’s work, the sun is the sky’s, | the moon is the sun’s, the 89 stars are the moon’s, and anything else in creation is theirs? For all things are the work of one, because “There is one God and Father of all, from whom are all things.”⁹⁶ 214. But if some things do originate through each other, as with the birth of animals, even that is not one thing originating from another, since

95 In the philosophical or scientific sense. An alternative would be “accident”.

96 *Eph* 4,6 with *1 Cor* 8,6.

the nature is unchanged in the offspring. How then, when he is unable to say such a thing in the case of the things observed in creation, can he argue this in the case of transcendent being, that the second being is the work of the first, and the third of the second? 215. But if he has observed animal generation, and hence imagined that something of the same sort should be attributed to the undefiled nature, so that the subsequent should be considered the work of what precedes, even then he cannot save the cogency of his argument. The things which originate from others are surely of the same kind as those they originate from. But Eunomius alleges that those originating from each other are foreign and alien, in order to prove the case for his abundant falsehood, like an ambidextrous fighter using both hands in his attempt to overthrow truth. 216. It is in order to demonstrate the diminished and naturally inferior status of the Son and the Spirit that he says that one originates from the other; and, so that those who learn from the way things originate from each other may never reach the thought of their intimate connexion as a result of such a manner of coming to be, he resists the principle of nature, both saying that one originates from another and asserting that the one begotten is illegitimate as far as concerns the nature of the one who begot him.

90 217. | What I think one might regard as even more culpable, is this. If an ordinary person had no experience of speaking, wanting training or practice in such arguments, and were then to state whatever happened to occur to him, one might perhaps forgive him for not using the customary methods for these things in his dogmatic argument. 218. But since Eunomius is so richly endowed with this ability that his method of comprehension extends to matters beyond
317M our nature, why did he not know the principle | on which comprehension of any obscure thing in these logical undertakings comes about? 219. For who does not know that every argument takes its first principles from things manifest and generally agreed, and thereby brings assurance in matters in dispute, and no unknown thing would ever be apprehended, if things assented to did not lead us by the hand to the understanding of the obscure? But if the things we take as first principles of arguments for the clarification of things unknown were in conflict with the apprehensions of ordinary people, they would hardly be the means to clarifying the unknown.

220. The whole conflict and doctrinal dispute, then, between the churchmen and the Anomeans is about whether we should consider the Son and the Spirit to be created, as our opponents say, or of the uncreated nature, as the church's faith holds. So Eunomius asserts that very thing which everyone denies as being
91 agreed, and without seeking for any evidence that the | subsequent being is the "work" of the one that precedes, he boldly decrees that it is so, getting his boldness from I know not what training or philosophy. 221. If assent should, as

something uncontested and undisputed, precede every argument and demonstration, so that the unknown is shown as strictly deriving from the premiss through the intervening arguments, then the one who proposes the subject of inquiry as an argument for yet further things merely argues from ignorance to ignorance and from deceit to deceit. That is, the blind makes himself the leader of the blind, as the Gospel says.⁹⁷ 222. Alongside the truly blind and hollow argument, which calls the creator and builder of all things “a created and made thing”, they yoke up another blind argument, that the Son is alien in nature, in being unlike, and wholly without part in the Father’s proper nature (*physikes oikeiotetos*). But it is not yet time for that. When he more nakedly exposes the impiety of his thought, that is the right time to which we also should defer the refutation of his impiety. It is for us now to return to the sequence of his words.

XVIII 223–230. It is illogical of him to divide his doctrine into a number of beings without providing any demonstration that it is so⁹⁸

223. “Yet again, since each of these beings both is and is perceived to be absolutely simple and altogether singular in its own rank, and since the activities are defined at the same time as their works, and the works match the activities of those who effected them, it necessarily follows both that the activities accompanying each of the beings are lesser and greater, and | that some occupy 92 the first, others the second rank.” 224. The purport of all these statements, however many words he takes to reach his conclusion, is one: to argue that the Son has no bond with the Father nor likewise the Spirit with the Son, but that their beings are sundered from each other, being split into an alienated nature and unrelated foreignness; and not only that, but differing in seniority and subordination of ranks, | so that some are, as he says himself, perceived to be greater, 320M others lesser, and are different in all other respects.

225. For our part, though it might seem to most people unnecessary to spend time on what is obvious and to attempt a detailed refutation of such things as are thought by most people to be of themselves false and abominable and wholly wanting force, yet to avoid any appearance of letting any of his statements pass unexamined for lack of arguments in refutation, so far as we are able we shall make a start on these too. “Each of these beings,” he says, “both

97 *Mt* 15,14; *Lk* 6,39.

98 The heading stands here in Winling. In the MSS it precedes the quotation in the middle of § 225.

is and is perceived to be absolutely simple and altogether singular in its own rank.”⁹⁹ In this case again he puts forward disputed matters and reckons that he is saying something, supposing that his assertion is sufficient substitute for any demonstration. He speaks of three beings; that is implied when he says, “Each of these beings.” He would not put it like that, if he thought there was just one.

226. If therefore he so expresses the difference of the beings from each other, so as not to appear to agree with the impiety of Sabellius, who attaches three titles to the one subject, then we agree, and no pious person contradicts his teaching, save insofar as he seems to be mistaken merely in terminology and the expression of the thought, using *ousiai* (beings) instead of *hypostases* (particular entities). 227. Not all things that have the same word for their being will similarly agree in the application of the word in a particular instance (*hypostasis*). Peter, James and John were the same as each other in the word for their being, since each of them is a man, but in the characteristics of each particular instance (*hypostasis*) they were not the same as each other. 228. If therefore he is arguing that one should not mix up the individual entities (*hypostases*) and apply the three titles to one person, his argument would be faithful, in accordance with the Apostle’s testimony, and worthy of all acceptance.¹⁰⁰ But since that is not his object, nor is he saying this in order to distinguish the hypostases from each other by their individuating notes, but is arguing that the substantive being itself is alien to the other, or rather to itself, and for this reason he names several beings, on the ground that each has alienation from the others as an individuating mark;—that is why I say that his argument is unfounded and headless, deducing the blasphemy by logical steps from no agreed premiss. 229. He has no argument so that one might be won over to such a doctrinal position, but like the telling of a dream he embraces the | statement of impiety bare and unargued. While the church teaches that faith should not be split into a number of beings, but that in three persons and hypostases we should believe in no difference where being is concerned, and while the opposition puts the diversity and dissimilarity in the beings themselves, Eunomius boldly asserts as if already argued what has not been proved and cannot be proved, when he has perhaps never before mentioned it for anyone to hear. 230. He would learn from an intelligent audience that every argument, so long as | it is put forward categorically and without demonstration, is what they call an old wives’ tale, since it has no power in itself to settle the issue, when no case is made for what is said either from the sacred text or from human logic. So much for that.

99 See §152 above.

100 1 Tim 1,15.

94

321M

XIX 231–241. In calling the divine being “simple” Eunomius allows only a nominal simplicity

231. Let us, however, look carefully at his words. He says that “each of these beings,” which he describes in his statement, “is simple and altogether singular.” Now, that the divine and blessed nature, which exceeds all thought, is simple, would not, I think, be denied even by those with a very brutish and poor mind. How could anyone take that to be pluriform and composite which has neither form nor shape, and to which no concepts of size and magnitude apply? 232. But that the underlying being should be considered to be simple does not agree with the doctrine which they present, though they love to use the word, will be clear even to the slightly informed. Everyone knows that strictly speaking simplicity does not | allow concepts of more and less to apply to the Holy Trinity. In a case where it is not possible to conceive any mixture and combination of qualities, but the mind apprehends a power without parts and composition, how and by what logic might the difference of greater and lesser be understood? 95

233. One who determines that such comparisons be made must inevitably envisage the incidence of some qualities in the subject. He either conceives the difference between them in terms of exceeding and falling short, and thus brings the concept of size into the debate, or he is arguing that it is superior or inferior in goodness, power, wisdom and whatever else is piously attributed to the divine; and thus he will not escape the imputation of composition. 234. There can be no lack of wisdom or power or any other good thing in one to whom goodness is not something acquired, but who is by nature constituted essentially such; so that whoever claims to apprehend lesser and greater beings in the divine nature has unwittingly argued that the divine is composed of dissimilar elements, so as to consider the subject to be one thing, and the attribute quite another, by participation in which what is not goodness comes to possess it. 235. But if he truly envisaged the being as “simple and altogether singular,” being itself what goodness actually is, and not becoming such by acquiring it, he would not think about it in terms of more and less. It was pointed out earlier that good things are diminished only by the presence of bad. 236. In cases where the existent by its nature does not admit of the worse, no limit is applicable to goodness; the infinite | is not such by its relation to something else, but itself by definition evades limitation. I do not know how anyone who has thought about it can agree to say that one infinite is more or less than another. 96

237. So if he allows that the underlying being is simple and is properly related to itself, let him agree that it has attached to it the attributes of the simple and infinite. But if he | detaches and alienates the beings from each other, envisaging another being of the Onlybegotten alongside the Father, and yet another of 324M

the Spirit alongside the Onlybegotten, and applies to them concepts of greater and less, let it be noted that, while he appears to delight in what is simple, in reality he argues for the composite.

238. Let us again take up the course of his statement. “Both being and perceived to be,” he says, “absolutely simple and altogether singular in its own rank.” What does “in its own rank mean”? If he is contemplating the beings as enjoying the same rank, the addition of the phrase was even then superfluous and redundant, since it dwells on matters generally agreed, though perhaps the inopportune expression deserved some indulgence, the piety of the thought making the vanity and superfluity of the words acceptable. 239. But in fact his peril is not a matter of a mere error of wording,—that disease might easily be cured—, but extends to malicious artifice. He says that each of the three beings “is simple in its own rank,” in order that his account of simplicity may conspire in crime with the definitions stated at the outset about the first, second
97 and third being. 240. Just as he | named the Father’s being as alone “highest” and alone “authentic”, allowing no such thing to the Son and the Spirit, neither the word “high” nor “most authentic”, in the same way, when he speaks of the beings as simple, it is according to the measure of the rank attributed to each that he thinks he ought to apply the concept of simplicity; he thinks of the most authentic and first as in utter and complete simplicity, while the second correspondingly reduces its measure of simplicity in proportion to the subordination of its levels of primacy, and similarly in the last case withdrawing so far from perfect simplicity as comparative rank is also in the final outcome diminished. 241. The outcome is that the Father’s being is reckoned absolutely simple, that of the Son is not strictly simple, but has some element of composition mixed in it, while the nature of the Holy Spirit has more of the composite in it, being in the final outcome gradually removed from the thought of simplicity. Just as it is agreed that what is not completely good in some degree participates in the opposite state, so what is not altogether simple cannot escape the imputation of being composite.

XX 242–260. He is wrong to postulate some activity prior to the existence of the Onlybegotten, which produces the personal being of Christ¹⁰¹

242. That he uses these words with this intention becomes plainer in what follows, where he more clearly reduces the thinking about the Son and the Spirit

101 Winling puts the header here, the MSS near the end of § 246.

to stunted and mean concepts. “Since,” he says, “the activities are defined at the same time as their works, | and the works match the activities of those who effected them, there is surely every necessity both that the activities accompanying each of the beings are lesser and greater, and that some | occupy the first and others the second rank.”¹⁰² 243. It may be that by hiding these things assiduously in a fog of verbiage he has made their meaning hard for most people to catch. Nevertheless, the sequence of what we have been examining will make it easy to clarify. “The activities,” he says, “are defined by their works.” He uses the name “works” for the Son and the Spirit, “activities” for the powers effective of them by which they were produced, which a little earlier he described as “accompanying the beings.” 244. The expression “defined by” indicates the equal status of the being that was produced with the power which constituted it,—or not so much the power as the “activity” of the power, as he himself calls it, so that what is produced should not be the work of the whole power of the agent, but such that an activity formed by part of the whole power had been set in motion, just so far as would appear to suffice for effecting what was coming into existence. He returns to repeat the point: “and these works match the activities of those who effected them.” 325M 98

245. We might find the meaning of this easier to understand with an example. Let us suppose that some leatherworkers’ tool functions like this: when the circular die-cutter¹⁰³ is applied to something which has to made into that shape, the material which is being cut by it is defined by the shape of the iron, and the circle in the cut portion will appear to be the same size as that in the tool; and the radius to which the tool is shaped will also be the same as the circle it will describe in cutting. 246. Such also is our theologian’s understanding of the divine person (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten. A certain activity accompanying the first being, functioning like a tool, | has, he says, made as a work commensurate with itself, the Lord. Such is his skill in glorifying the Son of God! The one who is now glorified in the Father’s glory and who will be revealed in the day of judgment, he says, being a work, matches the activity which produced him. What then is this activity, which accompanies the God of the universe, but is thought of as before the Onlybegotten and defining his being? 247.—a kind of quasi-substantial power, which subsists by itself and apparently operates by voluntary motion. This therefore is father to the Lord. And why should the title “Father” continue to be bruited about for the God 99

¹⁰² Still referring to §152.

¹⁰³ This kind of tool is most familiar for cutting pastry and cakes, but can also be used for leather, metal and other materials.

over all, if it is not he, but some activity externally accompanying him, that produced the Son? 248. And how is the Son a son, when he says that he came to exist through some other, and like a supposititious child (the Lord pardon the word) he thus presumed to his intimate relation to the Father, being honoured with the mere title of Son? And how will he place the Lord after the God of the universe, when he counts the Son third after the Father, that mediating activity being counted in second place after the God over all? 249. Moreover in such a

328M

sequence the Holy Spirit will surely no longer be | understood as in third place, but in fifth, since on Eunomius' reckoning the activity which accompanies the Onlybegotten, and by which the Holy Spirit was constituted, must surely be counted in between.

100 250. The doctrine that all things came to be through the Son | will in these ways be proved untenable, some other subsistent (*hypostasis*) senior to the Onlybegotten having been prefabricated by the modern theologian, and the cause of the creation of all things will presumably be attributed to that, since the construction of the Onlybegotten himself according to Eunomius' argument depends on that activity. 251. But if to avoid these absurdities he says that the activity, whose effect he posits to be the Son, is something non-hypostatic, he must again tell us how what is not follows from what is, and how what does not subsist produces what does. On this argument the nonexistent will be found to follow upon God, while things which are not become the cause of things that are, and things which in their own nature do not subsist prescribe the nature of those which do, and the power which effects and fabricates the whole creation will be circumscribed by what is by definition nonexistent. 252. Such are the doctrines of the theologian, who says that the Lord of heaven and earth and fabricator of all creation, the Word of God who was in the beginning, the one through whom are all things, came into existence by some non-existent and anhypostatic thing or concept, or whatever it is one ought to call the activity he has now concocted, and is defined by it, shut off on every side by a sort of fence of non-existence. And he who sees the invisible fails to perceive the end to which the sequence of his argument is leading. 253. For if God's activity is anhypostatic, and if by this is defined the work which is produced out of nonexistence, then surely the product will be perceived by nature to be of the same kind as | the nature of that which constituted the work, according to the fiction of the argument. And it is obvious to everybody what is meant by something which is both produced by the nonexistent and defined by it: nothing. 254. It is against nature for opposites to be bounded by opposites. Water is not bounded by fire nor light by darkness nor what is by what is not. But in his overabundance of philosophy Eunomius either does not understand these things, or else is deliberately blind to the truth.

101

255. From some alleged necessity he applies the notion of less in relation to the person (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten, and further argues that one should envisage extending this lessening beyond the Son to the Holy Spirit. His words to this effect are: "There is every necessity that the activities accompanying each of the beings are lesser and greater."¹⁰⁴ 256. The necessity which compels these things in the divine nature and allocates the greater and the less, | we have neither learned from him nor been able so far to understand for ourselves. 329M
Hitherto the principle obtains for everyone who receives the routine points of elementary Christian teaching, that there is no Necessity superior to the divine nature, which bends and compels the Onlybegotten towards the less, as if he were a bought slave. 257. But he passes that by, although it deserves no little discussion, and merely lays it down that he must be considered less. Yet this is not all that Necessity brings the argument to, but it takes the case even further into blasphemy, as our previous discussion has already partly shown. For if | 102
the Son is derived, not from the Father, but from some anhypostatic activity, not only will he be thought less than the Father, but necessity will require out and out doctrinal Judaism. 258. The consequence of this necessity is to prove, not that the product of what is not is a small thing, but something that one cannot safely mention even in the course of accusation. For just as by common consent, what has its birth from what is, must necessarily be, so conversely by common consent, what springs up from what is not, is not. For when something itself is not, how will it produce another from itself?

259. If then the activity which accompanies God and effects the Son does not exist in its proper being, who is so blind as not to perceive the blasphemy of the argument, because their aim is to deny our Saviour himself? And if the consequence of their doctrine is to steal from the faith the personal reality (*hypostasis*) of the Son, leaving him no more than the bare name, the Holy Spirit is hardly likely to be believed in as existing in his own personal reality (*hypostasis*), since his genealogy is traced in a series of non-existents. 260. When the activity which accompanies God does not exist as a being, and reason must necessarily take what it produces to be nonexistent, and another non-existence of an activity in turn accompanies that, and the Spirit is argued to have come to be through that, the blasphemy must surely be plain to all: they are arguing that, after the God who exists unbegotten, nothing really exists at all, since | 103
their doctrine proceeds through shadowy and non-existent fictions, and rests upon none of the things which in reality exist.

¹⁰⁴ See 152 above.

XXI 261–269. Their blasphemy is more heinous than the error of the Jews¹⁰⁵

261. Such is the absurdity to which those who teach such doctrine bring the case. But let us grant for argument's sake that it is not so. For they do actually allow and generously concede that the Son and the Holy Spirit exist in their own proper persons (*hypostases*). 262. But if in allowing this they also agreed to pious conceptions of them, they would not be fighting at all against the doctrine of the Church, nor splitting off from the common hope of Christians. But if it is merely in order to put | ready for themselves the materials and starting-point for blasphemy, that they grant being to the Son and Spirit, it may be a rash thing to say, but it would be more profitable for them to forswear the faith and desert to the Jewish religion, than to insult the title of Christian by their pretended confession. 263. The impiety of the Jews in consistently refusing hitherto to accept the Word extends only to this, that they do not confess the Christ who came, but await his coming; one cannot hear them uttering any idea that is vicious or destructive of the glory of the one they expect. 264. But the members of the new circumcision, or rather, as the Apostle says,¹⁰⁶ of the excision, do not deny that the expected one has come, but they imitate those who dishonour by disbelief and maltreatment the fleshly presence of the Lord.¹⁰⁷ The latter | set about pelting the Lord with stones, while the former are stoning the Word of truth with blasphemous statements. 265. The former put forward the lowliness and obscurity of his earthly birth as ground for rejecting his divine and preeternal birth; in the same way these too, refusing to confess his majestic, exalted and ineffable birth from the Father, argue that it is through creation that he has that being, from which both human nature and all generated things take their birth. 266. It was a complaint of the Jews that the Lord was considered to be the Son of the God over all. These men also object to those who truly make the same confession about him. The Jews thought they were honouring the God of the universe by excluding the Son from like honour. These also bestow the same on the One over all, bestowing honour on the Father by taking away the glory of the Lord.

267. It would be impossible to give a proper account of the extent and nature of the other features of their violence done to the Onlybegotten. Having first invented an activity preceding the personal existence (*hypostasis*) of Christ,

¹⁰⁵ The heading is placed here by Winling, before 263 by the MSS.

¹⁰⁶ *Phil* 3,2–3.

¹⁰⁷ *Jn* 8,59.

they call him a work and an effect, something the Jews have to this day never dared to do. Next they circumscribe the nature of the Lord, enclosing him within certain limits of the power that made him, delimiting him as with a measure, by the size of the activity that brought him into existence, enclosed on every hand by the tunic of the activity thought up by them. We cannot accuse the Jews of that. 268. Next they | envisage a diminution of the being by lessening it, in some way using their own power of comprehension to measure what has no quantity or size, and managing to discover by what quantity the Onlybegotten God falls short of completeness, for lack of which he is considered smaller and incomplete. In many other instances they profess one thing openly while secretly arguing another, | thus making the confession of the Son and Holy Spirit a way of exercising their own malice. 269. Must they not therefore be under more wretched judgment than the Jews, if the doctrines they so openly argue are such as the Jews have never dared? The one who lessens the being of the Son and the Holy Spirit might perhaps seem, if you just say or hear the words, to be only slightly irreverent. But if the statement is carefully inspected, he will be convicted of blasphemy at the capital point. Let us approach the subject in this way: in order to teach and clarify the falsehood argued by my opponents. I hope I may be pardoned if I proceed by stating our own position.

XXII 270–293. One ought not to attribute greater and less to the divine being; including an elaborated statement of Church doctrine

270. The most important distinction of all beings is that between the intelligible and the sensible. The sensible nature is generally given the name “visible” by the Apostle.¹⁰⁸ Because every material body has colour, and because it is vision that apprehends colour, he ignores such remaining qualities as substantially inhere, and uses for convenience the term referring to visual perception. 271. For the whole intelligible nature the common name, used by the Apostle is “the invisible”;¹⁰⁹ by removing the sensible apprehension | he leads the mind on to the incorporeal and intelligible. But reason divides the meaning of this intelligible nature also into two. For logic perceives one kind as uncreated, the other as created, an uncreated nature which makes the created, and a created nature which receives its cause and ability to exist from the uncreated. 272. Among the

¹⁰⁸ Col 1,16.

¹⁰⁹ Col 1,16.

sensible are all those things which we apprehend by the bodily senses, with reference to which the differences of qualities admit consideration of more and less, since differences of quantity and quality and other characteristics apply to them.

273. As to the intelligible nature, the created one I mean, the sort of principle of differentiation which was perceived in the case of sensible things cannot operate, but another means is found for indicating the difference between greater and less. 274. Because the fount and origin and supply of every good is considered to be in the uncreated nature, and the whole creation inclines towards the good, clasp[ing] at and partaking in the supreme nature through sharing in the first good, it follows of necessity that in proportion to their participation in the higher things some receive a larger share and others a smaller according to their freely exercised choice, and so more and less are known in the creation proportionately to the desire of each. 275. Since the intelligible nature on the created side stands at the border between good things and their opposite, so as to be capable of receiving either by inclining to those which it prefers, as | we learn from scripture, | there is room to speak of more and less in the one who excels in virtue in proportion to his rejection of the worse and approximation to the better. 276. The uncreated nature is far away from such a distinction, inasmuch as it does not have good as something acquired, nor does it receive moral virtue into itself by participation in some higher moral virtue, but because it is by nature what goodness is in itself, and is perceived as goodness, and is attested even by our opponents to be the fount of goodness, simple, uniform and uncompounded. 277. It has a distinction of its own appropriate to the majesty of its nature, not thought of in terms of more and less, as Eunomius supposes; for one who lessens his conception of the good in any member of the holy Trinity we believe in, will surely be making out that some of the opposite state has been mixed in in the case of the one who falls short in goodness, which it is not true religion to hold either about the Onlybegotten or about the Holy Spirit. Rather, being thought of as in utter perfection and incomprehensible transcendence, it possesses unconfused and clear differentiation through the characteristics to be found in each of the persons (*hypostases*), being exactly the same inasmuch as they are uncreated, and singular in the special characteristics of each.

278. The particularity attributed to each of the persons (*hypostases*) plainly and unambiguously distinguishes them from each other. Thus the Father is confessed to be uncreated and unbegotten, for he is neither begotten nor created. This being uncreated therefore he has in common with the Son and the | Holy Spirit. But he is both unbegotten and Father; this is personal and incommunicable, and it is not perceived in either of the others. 279. The Son is con-

nected to the Father and the Spirit in being uncreated, but has his individuation in being, and being called, Son and Onlybegotten, which does not belong to the God over all or to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who has a share with the Father and the Son in the uncreated nature, is again distinguished from them by recognisable features. His feature and mark is quite uniquely to be none of those things which reason envisaged as peculiar to the Father and the Son. 280. To be neither unbegotten nor onlybegotten, but certainly to be, provides his special personal difference from the others mentioned. Connected with the Father in being uncreated, he is conversely separated from the Father by not being Father as he is. His connexion with the Son in being uncreated, [and in having the cause of his existence from the God of the universe,]¹¹⁰ is not continued when it comes to the personal characteristic, since he did not come to be onlybegotten from the Father and has been | manifested through the Son himself. 109
 Again, since the creation came to exist through the Onlybegotten, lest the Spirit be thought to have anything in common with it because he was manifested through the Son, the Spirit is distinguished from the creation by changelessness and immutability and by having no need of goodness from outside itself. 281.
 Creation | does not have changelessness in its nature, as Scripture says when it relates the fall of Lucifer,¹¹¹ of which the Lord also speaks when he tells mysteries to his disciples: "I saw Satan fallen as lightning from the sky."¹¹² What separates him from the creation is the same as what unites him intimately to the Father and the Son. In the case of those whose nature admits nothing bad one and the same account must be given of changelessness and immutability. 337M

282. After these preliminary remarks it is now perhaps time to examine our opponents' account. In his artful statement about the Son and the Holy Spirit he says, "Necessity requires that the beings are greater and lesser."¹¹³ Let us enquire by what logic he arrives at the necessity of such a difference, whether some material comparison has been made between things measured against each other, or whether it is conceived in terms of the intelligible as one exceeds or falls short in virtue, or whether it is in the being itself. 283. In the case of being

110 Jaeger deletes this clause as a dogmatic clarification from the time of the dispute over the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, or from the Father alone. This emendation is rejected by some authorities, including E. Moutsoulas in this volume. See Winling *ad loc.*

111 *Is* 14,12.

112 *Lk* 10,18.

113 In §152 Eunomius refers to the "activities which accompany the beings," not to the actual "beings."

110 however it has been shown by those who are skilled in such philosophy that no difference can be predicated, if one examines it by itself in accordance with its own | principle of being, stripped bare of the qualities and characteristics attributed to it. To conceive such a distinction in connexion with the Onlybegotten and the Spirit in terms of success or failure of virtue, and consequently to suppose that the nature of each of them is necessarily detectable, equally receptive of opposites and lying on the border between good and its opposite, is utterly profane. 284. One who says this will be arguing that it is one thing in its own proper definition, and becomes something else by participation in good and evil. Thus it happens with iron that, if it associates for a long time with fire, it takes on the quality of heat, while remaining iron, but if it gets into snow or ice, it changes its quality towards the prevailing influence, taking the cold of the snow into its own intimate parts.

285. Therefore, just as we do not give the material the name of the quality attributed to the iron, for we do not call something fire or ice because it has been affected by one of these, so if it be granted that, as the impious argue, in the case of the lifegiving power goodness does not essentially inhere in it, but that it is acquired by participation, it will no longer have the right to be called by the title “the good”, but such an understanding will demand some other conception, such that goodness is not attributed to it eternally, nor is it intrinsically understood to possess the nature of goodness, but that the good sometimes is not in it and sometimes will not be. 286. If good things come to be by participation in what is better, then clearly before their participation they were not such; 111; and if when they were something else they | were tinged with the presence of 340M good, then surely if they are deprived of it, they will be reckoned something other than the good; and if that prevails, the divine nature will be perceived as not so much a provider of good things as itself in need of a benefactor. 287. How could one provide another with what it does not itself possess? If then it has it perfectly, we shall envisage no falling short in perfection, and it is vain to argue for what is less in what is perfect. If on the other hand participation in the good is deemed imperfect in them and in this respect they speak of the less, observe the consequence, that the one in this condition will not be benefactor to what is inferior, but will make efforts to fill up what it itself lacks. Thus according to them the doctrine of providence is false, as are those of judgment, of the dispensation,¹¹⁴ and of all the things which we believe were done by the Only-

114 Greek *oikonomia* (“dispensation”) is commonly used by the Fathers to refer to the whole incarnation and saving work of Christ, and some English writers use “the economy” in a similar sense.

begotten and are for ever done by him, since he is apparently busy attending to his own goodness and neglects the government of the universe.

288. If this idea were to prevail, that the Lord is not perfect in every good, it is not difficult to see where the blasphemy ends up. Truly the faith of such persons is vain, empty their preaching, insubstantial their hopes, whose substance comes with faith. Why are they baptized into Christ, who has no power of goodness of his own?—far be it from me to utter such blasphemy. 289. And why do they believe in the Holy Spirit, if they think the same things about him too? How can | they after their mortal birth be born again by baptism, when on their view even the power that gives them rebirth does not by nature possess indefectibility and self-sufficiency? How is the body of their humiliation transformed,¹¹⁵ when they think that the one who transforms is himself in need of change for the better, wanting yet another to transform even him? 290. As long as he is in the lesser state, since from the goodness of its nature the superior naturally implants in those inferior a ceaseless attraction to itself, the longing for the more will never stop, but as desire continually stretches out to what is not yet achieved, what is less will always desire what is more, and will continually be changed into what is greater, and will never reach perfection, since it will never get to that end, which it must embrace to cease its ascent. 291. Since the First Good is infinite by nature, the participation of the one which enjoys it must also perforce be infinite, ever apprehending more, and always discovering what exceeds the apprehended, and never able to draw level with it, since neither can what is shared be fathomed, nor can what grows by participation desist.

112

292. | Such then are the blasphemies which arise from the argument based on distinctions of goodness. But if they apply “more” and “less” to them in terms of corporeal concepts, | the absurdity of the argument is at once generally granted, even without precise examination of the detail. It inevitably follows that qualities and dimensions, weights and shapes, and all those things, which together make up the account of a physical object, should be included with these concepts in the divine nature. And where composition is alleged, there surely it must be conceded there is dissolution of the composite. 293. These and similar things follow from the doctrinal absurdity, which dares to allege lesser and superior in the immeasurable and incomparable, as our account has indicated by taking some of the many points; it would be difficult to expose here all the guile hidden in the doctrine; but even a few statements will equally well demonstrate the absurdity of what is claimed in the sequence of blasphemy.

341M

113

¹¹⁵ *Phil* 3,21.

XXIII 294–316. The teaching of the faith is not unattested, being supported by scriptural testimonies¹¹⁶

294. It is for us now to proceed with the next stage of the argument, after some slight further definitions have been added in support of our doctrine. Since the divine testimony is a sure test of truth in any doctrine, I think it would be as well also to confirm our word too with the words of God.

295. We have acknowledged the following classes in distinguishing between beings, first the one which is first in our apprehension, I mean the sensible, and next the one perceived by the mind through the leading of sensible things, which we call the intelligible. We also accept another further distinction of the intelligible, which divides it into created and uncreated. We decided that the Holy Trinity belongs to the uncreated nature, and whatever is mentioned, exists and | has a name besides the Trinity, belongs to the created. 296. So that our definition may not stand unsupported, but secured by the testimonies of Scripture, we shall add one thing to what has been said: that the Lord was not created, but came forth from the Father, as the Divine Word himself in person attests in the Gospel,¹¹⁷ by that ineffable and inexplicable manner of his birth or coming-forth. 297. What truer witness could be found than the voice of the Lord, who throughout the Gospel calls his own true Father “Father” and not “Creator”, and refers to himself not as “work of God” but as “Son of God”? 298. Just as, in order to indicate his fleshly participation in the human, he used the title “Son of Man” for the visible, showing the natural affinity of his flesh with that from which it was taken, so he points out by the title “Son” his true and genuine relation to the God of the universe, using the word “Son” to point to the natural intimacy. If some | put forward barely and without interpretation the things from the proverbial saying which are darkly and enigmatically expressed in a parable, and to refute the truth avail themselves of the expression about being created, which the proverb-writer put into the mouth of Wisdom, in support of the perversity of their doctrine, saying that “The Lord created me”¹¹⁸ is a confession that the Lord is created, since the Onlybegotten by this expression did not

¹¹⁶ The heading stands before § 295 in the MSS, but Winling has it here.

¹¹⁷ *Jn* 8,24; 16,27; 17,8.

¹¹⁸ *Pr* 8,22: This text is used by Eunomius in *Apologia* 26.15; 28.23 (Vaggione 70, 74). Athanasius had discussed it at length in *c. ar.* 11 44–61; see *Athanasius Werke* 11,2 (Berlin 1998) 220–238, where the important fragments 23–46 of Marcellus of Ancyra are also fully documented. See also Ps-Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* IV (PG 704A–B). Gregory has a fuller discussion in *CE* III/1 21–65 (GNO II, 10,22–27,8). See also H. Drobner in this volume.

reject such a thing, we must not heed the argument. 299. They do not even provide proofs that it is absolutely necessary to refer this text to the Lord. Neither | will they be able show the meaning of the saying on the basis of the Hebrew 115 scripture supporting this interpretation, since the other translators give *ektêsato* (obtained) and *katestêsen* (established) instead of *ektisen* (created); nor, if that were the reading of the original text, would the sense be straightforward and plain, because proverbial teaching does not state openly the purport of the words; but hiddenly, with oblique expression. Thus the obscurity of meaning may be observed in the continuation of the words near this passage, where it says, "When he appointed his throne on the winds,"¹¹⁹ and that sort of thing. 300. What throne is God's? Is it a physical one or an intelligible? And which winds? Are they the ordinary ones we know, which are said by scientists in the field to consist of gases and vapours? Or are they to be understood in some other way, which human experience does not know, when it says they serve as a base for the throne? And what is the seat of the God who is without body, circumference or shape? How could anyone understand all these things from the ordinary meaning of these words?

301. Clearly riddles (*aenigmata*) are sayings of certain persons which contain a connotation somewhat deeper than the obvious meaning, such that in no way could the idea that the Lord has been created suggest itself from these words to those whose thinking is religiously sound, especially to those instructed by the clear voice of the Evangelist, who | says that all things that have come to be 116 through him and are constituted in him. 302. For "All things," he says,¹²⁰ "came to be through him, and without him came to be not one thing that has come to be in him." He would not have declared it so, if he had believed the Lord himself also to be one of the things that have come to be. For how do all things come to be through him, and the things that have come to be have their constitution in him, unless the maker were something quite other than the nature of made things, and produced not himself but the creation? 303. If the creation is through him, and the Lord himself is not through himself, he is something quite other and not a creature. So where the Evangelist said, "All things came to be through him, and without him came to be not one thing that has come to be in him," and thereby clearly indicated that the things that came to be have come to be in the Son, and found their way into being by no other means, 304.

119 *Pr* 8,27.

120 *Jn* 1,3; cf. *Col* 1,16. In this passage the Greek verb *ginesthai* is translated "come to be": it is often used as the passive of "make", and can be translated "be made". The punctuation of *Jn* 1,3-4 is notoriously uncertain, and Gregory takes "in him" unusually with what precedes.

345M Paul accepts that word, and so as to | leave no excuse for the blaspheming voice to include the nature of the Spirit in the number of things which came to be, he enumerates everything, what these “all things” are which are spoken of and thought of by the Evangelist. In the same way great David, when he said that all things had been subjected to man, added specifically what they were which were embraced by the word “all”, that is the animals of land, sea and air. Similarly when the Apostle, the instructor in divine doctrines, | says that all things had come to be in him, he defines the meaning of “all things” by enumerating them: 305. “Visible and invisible,” he says, by the visible (as has been said) explicitly referring to the things known by sense, by the invisible indicating the nature of the intelligible things.

117 306. As far as sensible things are concerned, however, there was no necessity to deal with them individually in detail. No one is so carnal and bestial as to suppose that the Holy Spirit is also among the sensible things. But in mentioning the invisibles, because the nature of the Spirit is also intellectual and incorporeal, so that none should suppose that the Spirit had come to exist because he is classed as invisible, the Apostle makes very plain the distinction between the things which came to be through creation and the being above creation. 307. He enumerates the created things in his account, speaking of certain “thrones and principalities and authorities and sovereignties,”¹²¹ giving instruction in general and comprehensive terms, about these invisible powers, while those above creation he separates by his very silence from the number of the created things. 308. It is as if someone were ordered to state by name the junior and subordinate officers in an army, and in giving particulars of taxiarchs and lochagi, centurions and chiliarchs, and all the other names there are for particular ranks, he made no mention of the office of the one who was in general command and in overall charge; it would not be through oversight or forgetfulness that he failed to mention the supreme office, but because if his orders or intentions were to list the subordinate and inferior ranking, it would be outrageous to | include in the list of underlings the supreme officer. Similarly, I think, 118 Paul, who was initiated into ineffable things in paradise, when, enraptured, he entered into himself, and being made a spectator of supercelestial wonders, he both saw and heard things beyond human words,¹²²—Paul, I say, when he intended to teach about things created in the Lord, having listed in comprehensive terms the angelic and supernatural power, stopped his list at the ones mentioned, and did not drag into the catalogue of created things any of those

121 Col 1,17.

122 2 Cor 12,2f.

above creation, so that from this it is clearly attested by what he wrote that the Holy Spirit is higher than creation.

309. | If anyone were to reject the argument on the ground that the Cherubim are not mentioned by Paul either, but that with the Spirit these also are passed by in silence in counting up the things that have come to be, and were to argue that, because mention of these is omitted, either they also should be reckoned above creation or the Spirit not so reckoned, he should consider the meaning of the things counted up, and what is apparently omitted, in that it is not mentioned by name, he will perceive in the text. 310. The one who mentions the thrones has by another name spoken of the Cherubim, using the more familiar word to translate the obscure Hebrew into Greek. Having heard that God sits upon the Cherubim¹²³ he has named those powers of the one who sits upon them “thrones”. It is the same with the Seraphim in Isaiah, by whom the mystery of the Trinity was manifestly proclaimed, when they wondrously cried aloud the word “holy”, astonished at the beauty of each member of the Trinity.¹²⁴ They are included in the list of those mentioned, | being called by the title “powers” by great Paul and by the prophet David before him. 311. David says, “Bless the Lord all his powers, who do his will;”¹²⁵ while Isaiah, instead of saying “Bless”, wrote down the words of the blessing: “Holy holy holy is Lord Sabaoth, all the earth is full of his glory.”¹²⁶ That these powers who do the will of God are ministers he hinted at in the purification from sins by one of the Seraphim, which occurred at the behest of the one who sent him.¹²⁷ For it is the ministry of these spirits to be sent out for salvation of those being saved. 312. In my opinion the divine Apostle had noticed these things, and having learnt that the same thing is signified by the two prophets under different titles, he selected the better-known term and called the Seraphim “powers”, so that no pretext should be left for malicious persons to say that the Holy Spirit had been included on an equal footing with one of these in the catalogue of creation. 313. Some things are stated, as has been shown, others passed by in silence, as it is possible to learn from the selection made by Paul: while counting up the whole creation in plural terms, he did not mention any of those being spoken of in the singular. It is characteristic of the Holy Trinity that they are proclaimed singularly, one Father and one Son and one Holy Spirit. All those he mentions are

¹²³ *Is* 37,16.

¹²⁴ *Is* 6,3.

¹²⁵ *Ps* 102/103,21.

¹²⁶ *Is* 6,3.

¹²⁷ *Is* 6,7.

listed in the plural, principalities and authorities and lordships and powers, so as to provide no suggestion that one of them is the Holy Spirit.

120 **314.** | Paul is silent about the ineffable things, and rightly so. He knew how
349M to listen to the ineffable words in Paradise, | and how to avoid recounting the
inexpressible, when he is composing a work on lower things. But the enemies
of truth insolently set about even the ineffable, insulting the majesty of the
Spirit with the mean status of creature, as though they had not heard that God
the Word himself, when passing to his disciples the mystery of divine knowl-
edge, said that in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
life is fulfilled and made available to those being born again,¹²⁸ and by setting
him beside the Father and himself he separated the Spirit from any suspicion
of creatureliness. **315.** Thus in both respects the pious and proper view of him
appeared, when Paul in referring to creation kept silent about the nature of
the Spirit, and when the Lord in referring to the lifegiving power associated
the Holy Spirit with the Father and himself. So our account, guided by holy
Scripture, sets both the Onlybegotten and the Holy Spirit above the creation,
and in accordance with the Saviour's saying it suggests that we should by faith
consider them as in the blessed and lifegiving and uncreated nature. **316.** Con-
sequently, what is believed to be above creation and of the prime and utterly
perfect nature, in no way admits of any reference to lessening, however much
121 the champion of heresy may trim the infinite, using the concept of less to cut |
down and reduce the perfection of the divine being by determining to attribute
to them greater and less.

**XXIV 317–340. It is nonsense when he elaborates arguments about size
and superiority of works and activities in the doctrines of
religion¹²⁹**

317. We must now turn to what Eunomius adds in his sequence of statements. After saying that necessity requires that the beings must be considered to be greater and less, and that some occupy the first rank, being given a place of preeminence according to some difference of size and worth, while others are pushed down to second place because of their inferiority of nature and worth, he puts forward the following. **318.** “They reach,” he says, “the same degree of difference as their works reach. For it would not be right to speak of the same

¹²⁸ *Mt* 28,19.

¹²⁹ The heading stands here in Winling. The MSS place it in the middle of §§ 321.

activity by which he made the angels, or the stars and heaven, or man; but just as works may be senior to or more honourable than other works, to the same degree one might emphatically say that one activity excels another, inasmuch as the same activities produce identical works, and varied works reveal varied activities.”¹³⁰

319. I do not suppose that even the author could readily say what he might have meant when he wrote this. The meaning of what he says is so thick with muddy phraseology that no one | could easily discern the intelligible sense in the mire. “They reach the same degree of difference that the works reach,” | one might suppose to be the work of some Loxian (Apollo) in the heathen myth babbling away to deceive his hearers. 320. But if we must follow our previous examination by guessing at the meaning of his arguments here, what is being pointed out is this: whatever difference distinguishes the works from each other, the same difference from each other will be observed between the activities too. What the works are which he is writing about here cannot be deduced from the words. 321. If he is talking about the things observed in creation, I do not know what connexion these things have with what went before. When the debate is about Father, Son and Holy Spirit, what occasion is there for scientific discussion of earth, water, air, fire and the differences between animals, and for going into an account and description of “works senior to and more honourable than other works,” and for saying that it is plausible to discern that “one activity excels another”? 322. But if he is applying the term “works” to the Onlybegotten Son and the Holy Spirit, what then are the differences of activities he speaks of, whereby these works are produced? And what again are those activities which excel the activities? 323. He has neither made clear what the excellence means, by which, in his own words, one activity “excels” the other, nor has there been any discussion of the nature of the activities; his argument has not so far touched upon any of them, either to argue that it exists substantially, or to show that it is the anhypostatic motion of a will. The meaning of the words is throughout | flung in between the concepts, so that it is blown about from one sense to another. 122 352M 123

324. He adds that “it would not be right to speak of the same activity by which he made the angels or the stars and heaven or man.” Again, by what necessity or chain of argument he brought this into his statements, or why he argues from these that the activities are to the same extent different from each other as the works also differ from each other, so as to argue that they are not all the works of the same one, but have their origin one from one, one from another, I am

130 Quoting §153, with slight variations.

not aware. 325. Heaven and angel and star and man, and everything perceived in creation, we are taught by Scripture to be the works of One. The account of their doctrine argues that the Son and the Spirit are not the works of One, but the Son is the work of the activity which accompanies the first being, and the Spirit in turn the work of that work. 326. What heaven and man, angel and star, which have now been included with them in the argument, have to do with his case, it is for him to say, or whether anyone shares his secret wisdom. In these things the profanity plainly appears in the words, while the case for profanity is at variance even with itself. 327. To think that the same difference is to be seen in the Holy Trinity as one may perceive between heaven, which | contains all creation, and the individual man, or between an angel and the | star which appears in heaven, is manifestly profane. The connexion of thoughts and the sequence of the argument about this is, I say, not easy to perceive, either for me, or perhaps even for the father of the blasphemy himself. 328. If indeed he thought something like this about creation, that heaven is a work of some superior activity, and that the star is a product of the activity which accompanies the heaven, the angel a product of that and the man of that, then his logic would have some force, and would argue for the doctrine through comparison of like things. But if he himself agrees that all these things came to be through One, assuming he does not contradict the word of the Scriptures outright, and if he decides that another principle applies to the account of those others (sc. the Trinity), what have his propositions to do with what preceded?

329. Let it be granted however that these things have something in common for the purpose of demonstrating differences between beings, which is what he wants to argue in what he is saying; we must still notice how he connects what follows with what is already stated. He says, "Just as works may be senior to and more honourable than other works, to the same degree one religiously minded might say that one activity excels another." If he says that about things sensible, the matter is distant from the subject proposed. 330. What need is there for one proposing to discuss doctrine to philosophize about the arrangement of things constructed at the world's beginning and | to insist that the activities of the creator are both higher and lower in proportion to the size of each of the generated things? 331. But if it is about the others he is talking, and by "works senior to and more honourable than works" he means those concocted by him now in his doctrine, to wit the Son and the Holy Spirit, one might well treat the subject with silent contempt, rather than by getting involved to support the view that what he decides is also plausible. For how could the more honourable be found where there is none more dishonourable? 332. If he has gone so far in his facility and readiness for evil as to apply both the word and the idea of "more dishonourable" to any of those believed to be members of the Holy Trinity, we

ought to block our ears and flee as fast as we can from hearing evil, to prevent any part of the stain attaching to the hearer, as the word is poured into the heart of the hearer from a sort of jug full of filth.

333. How could anyone dare to say such a thing of the divine and honoured and transcendent nature, when by comparison it argues that “more dishonourable” is implied? “That all may honour the Son,” he says, “as they honour the Father.”¹³¹ While this saying enjoins as law the equality of honour, for the divine word is law, Eunomius crosses out both law and Lawgiver, and distributes honour, more to one, less to another, discovering (I know not how) the dimensions of the one possessing greater honour. In human | practice differences of honour are determined by those in charge of honours, so that subjects do not | approach kings and their subordinate officials on the same equal footing, but the greater and lesser display of fear and respect in those approaching is an indication of the absence or abundance of honour in those being honoured, and the best way to find the more honourable in the status of the subjects, is when one seems to be more to be feared than those around him and to deserve more respect than is the case with the others. 334. But with the divine nature, because all perfection in respect of goodness appears together in the designation as divine, it is not possible in our view to discover the manner of or priority in honour. Where neither greater nor lesser possession is conceived of power, glory, wisdom, kindness or any other good one can think of, but every good thing the Son has belongs to the Father, and everything the Father has is seen in the Son, by what shift shall we show the greater share of honour in the Father? 335. If our mind were to go to kingly power and worth, the Son is a king. If we think of a judge, all judgment is the Son’s. If our thought dwells on the magnificence of creation, “all things came to be through him.”¹³² If we contemplate the cause of our life, we know the true Life which descended to our nature; and if we enquire about translation out of darkness, we are not ignorant of the true Light, by whom we were made foreigners to darkness. And if anyone thinks wisdom is to be honoured, “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God”.¹³³ 336. Since our mind will probably be disposed to admire to the greatest possible extent such and so many wonderful aspects of Christ, what superiority of honour | will it be possible to conceive as especially rendered to the Father alone, in which the Son will properly have no part? 337. The reason is that human honour to the divine when correctly understood is nothing but a loving

¹³¹ *Jn* 5,23.

¹³² *Jn* 1,3.

¹³³ *1Cor* 1,24.

attitude and the acknowledgement of the good things that belong to it, and it seems to me that the idea, that the Son must be honoured just as the Father is,¹³⁴ was used by the Word instead of love. It is by loving God with all the heart and strength¹³⁵ that the law bids us yield him honour, and in this place God the Word legislates for equality of love when he says that the Son is to be honoured just as the Father is. 338. This way of showing honour to the Lord was fully expressed in great David when he confessed in the opening of a Psalm that he loved the Lord, and went through the reasons for his love, calling him “strength”, “stronghold”, “refuge”, “deliverer”, “succouring God”, “hope”, “shield”, “horn of salvation”, “helper”, and such things.¹³⁶ 339. If it is not the Onlybegotten that has become these things to men, | then let abundance of honour be withdrawn from him on this account as heresy decrees. But if our faith is that the Onlybegotten God is, and is named as, all these things and more besides, deemed equal, on every consideration of good that exists or can be conceived, with the majesty of the goodness in the Father, how could it be said to be reasonable either not to love such a one, or to dishonour the one we love? 340. It could not be said that love should come from the whole heart and strength, but honour | from only half. So if the Son is honoured from the whole heart because all love is offered to him, what thinking will discover the extra honour, when the whole heart through love is freely giving him the greatest possible degree of honour? It is useless therefore in the case of those honourable by nature to teach a doctrine of greater honour, and through such comparison to propose the idea of the more dishonourable.

XXV 341–358. The one who argues that the Father is older than the Son by some conceivable interval will be obliged to say that the Father is also not without beginning

341. The concept of “seniority” may however be truly applied to the sensible creation. When the sequence of works is being manifested on a series of days, it could be said that the heaven was so much older than the constitution of man, and the intervening time will be measured by the period of days. But to suppose that in the case of the first Nature, which transcends every temporal thought and exceeds all conceptual understanding, one is ahead in temporal seniority,

¹³⁴ *Jn* 5,23.

¹³⁵ *Mk* 12,39 par.

¹³⁶ *Ps* 17/18,1–3.

another behind, belongs to the wisdom now revealed. 342. For to assert that the Father is senior to the personal existence (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten is just the same as to assert that the Son himself is junior to the things made by the Son, if indeed it is true to say that all ages and every temporal distinction came to be after the Son and through the Son. 343. Furthermore, a point which exposes even more the absurdity of the doctrine, not only will a temporal beginning of existence for the Son be implied by this sort of reasoning, but they will not on this logic spare even the Father from the argument that he had his beginning in time. For if there is some superior indicator marking the begetting of the Son, it will also determine for the Father the beginning of his existence (*hypostasis*).

344. For clarity's sake it would perhaps be the moment | to examine the argu- 129
ment in greater detail. If one holds that the life of the Father is senior to that of the Son, one is surely separating the Onlybegotten from the God over all by a certain interval. This interval between must either be supposed infinite, or else limited by clear lines and points. 345. But the concept of lying between will not permit one to say it is infinite, or it will altogether rule out logically the concept of the Father and the Son. It will not consider it intermediate either, as long as it is infinite and bounded on neither side, with neither the concept of the Father delimiting the progress of the infinite backwards, nor the Son cutting off the infinity at the other end. | The concept of the infinite is just that, to extend by 360M
nature in all directions and to be circumscribed by no limit whatever. 346. So in order that the conception of being shall remain firm and constant in both the Father and the Son, there is no room for the view that the interval is infinite, but they will of necessity separate the Onlybegotten from the Father by something finite. Now what I am saying is this, that this reasoning will show that the God over all is not from eternity, but has his beginning from some fixed point. 347. My meaning is as follows. I will explain it using familiar examples to clarify the thought, so that the unknown may be elucidated through things already clear. If we say on the basis of Moses' scripture that man originated on the fifth day after the heaven,¹³⁷ we argue that on this reasoning the absence of mention implies that before this number of days the heaven did not exist either. So when something happens after something else, it defines by the interval which precedes it the existence (*hypostasis*) of what is considered to be earlier. 348. If we have not | clarified the argument sufficiently by this example, it 130
is possible to put the idea in another way. In saying that the law given by Moses

137 Gen 1,6.26.

is four hundred and thirty years later than the promise to Abraham,¹³⁸ if we extend arithmetically the time after the law until we reach the end of the years counted, we clearly understand that before this time the promise of God did not exist. One could add many such examples, but to go through them all one by one would be tedious, and I pass on.

349. Let us now investigate the statement before us in accordance with the logic of the examples described. It was the statement in accordance with the view of our opponents that “senior” and “junior” in relation to each other apply to the personal being (*hypostasis*) of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 350. When therefore we have passed through the begetting of the Son, as the logic of the heresy leads us to suppose, and go back by the intervening interval, which the empty notion of those who teach this suggests is something thought of as between the Son and the Father, and if we reach that earliest point by which they measure the interval between, there we find that the life of the God of all ceases at its earliest point, so that the conclusion necessarily follows that previously even the everlasting God is not believed to exist.

131 351. If doubt remains, we might again think about the matter with the help
361M of examples. If we have two rods, one shorter and the other longer, we put both
bottoms together and use the tops to find out which is longer. | By putting the
end of the shorter one alongside we know from it how much longer the taller
one is, and | we discover how much the shorter one falls short by using some
measurement to bring the smaller up to the size of the larger one, whether a
cubit or whatever the length is by which the greater exceeds the less. 352. Sim-
ilarly, if there is, on our adversaries’ argument, a greater length in the life of
the Father as compared with that of the Son, it must surely consist of a fixed
interval, and they are bound to agree that this will not extend into the future.
Even the enemies of truth allow that both are alike immortal, but they con-
ceive this difference in the distant past, not equating the life of the Son with
the Father, but extending the concept of the Father further in length of life.
353. Since therefore every length must certainly be limited by two ends, it must
necessarily follow that the two points which indicate the ends should be con-
ceived for the interval postulated by them. So just as one part, according to
them, has its beginning from the generation of the Onlybegotten, so also the
other extreme must surely coincide with another end, by which the interval is
completed and defines itself. What then this end is, they must say, if they are
not ashamed to follow up their own words.

354. Reason admits no doubt, but that they will find no other end corre-
sponding to the other part of the interval they invent, unless they absolutely

¹³⁸ Gal 3,17; Exod 12,41.

suppose a beginning for the (life) of the Unbegotten, from which | they calculate what intervenes before the Son's generation. 355. So what we are saying is this, that if you say the Son is later than the life of the Father by some intervening extent, you will be setting a definite beginning to the existence of the Father too, defined by the supposed interval in between. Thus on this reasoning they will find themselves robbed of their celebrated "ingeneracy" of the Father by the very champions of "ingeneracy", so that they will not be saying that the unbegotten God always exists, but arguing that he got the beginning of his existence from a finite beginning. 356. For the one who has a beginning of existence is not unbegun. But if it is in every way correct to confess the Father as unbegun, let there be no fiddling about with a fixed point for the life of the Son, from which he began to exist and is cut off from life beyond that point. It is enough to attribute priority to the Father over the Son solely in the matter of causation, and not think of the life of the Father as once separate and private before the begetting of the Son. Otherwise this idea will bring in with it the concept of an interval measured before the manifestation of the Son against the life of his Begetter. The inevitable consequence will be to suggest a beginning for the life of the Father too, at which the imagined interval before the Son ceases its backwards extent, in itself defining the beginning of the presupposed life of the Father. 357. Rather (we should), while we confess "from him", bold though it seem, not deny "with him", being led towards this thought by what is written in Scripture.¹³⁹ 358. | When we are told by Wisdom of the "radiance of eternal light," we conceive the radiance simultaneously with the eternity of the original light, both | recognizing the cause of the radiance and rejecting "senior." 132
133
364M
Thus the doctrine of true religion will be preserved, with neither the Son's life ceasing as it is traced backwards, nor the Father's eternity being foreshortened through supposing the Son's beginning to be finite.

XXVI 359–385. The kind of thinking which was applied to the Father and the Son will not also fit the creation, as they try to make it, but the Son must be confessed as eternally with the Father, and the creation as having its origin from some fixed time

359. One of those who resist the argument will perhaps say that the creation has by common consent a beginning of being, yet neither are existing things conceived as sharing the eternity of the Artificer, nor by its own beginning does

¹³⁹ *Wisd* 7,26.

it stop the infinity of the divine life, in the way in which the argument demonstrated the absurdity when discussing the Father and the Son. So it would follow on this argument that we should say without hesitation, either that the creation is coeternal with God, or that the Son also is of later origin; for the argument about the interval will also similarly demonstrate the absurdity when the measurement is made from the creation to the Maker. 360. The one who makes such a reply has perhaps not correctly followed the meaning of the doctrine, and is using what is irrelevant and wholly inappropriate to the subject to attack what has been said. If he were able to show that any of the things above creation has the beginning of its existence (*hypostasis*) in some interval-mark, and it were generally recognized to be possible to conceive the idea of the intervening period even before creation, he might possibly have occasion to try to destroy with such manipulations the eternity demonstrated for the Onlybegotten by the argument. 361. All the voices of religious men however confess that all beings exist either through creation or before creation, and that the divine nature | is according to the faith uncreated, and in it the doctrine of religion teaches that one has existence as cause, the other as caused, without any separation, whereas creation is thought of in terms of temporal extent. All temporal order therefore and sequence of things generated is apprehended by means of periods of time, while the pretemporal nature is free from distinctions of “senior” and “junior”, since what reason perceives as belonging to creation are not conceived as applying also to the divine and blessed life. 362. All creation, as has been said, having come to exist in an orderly sequence, is measured by the interval of temporal periods, and if one goes back in thought through the series of created things to the beginning of what exists, he will end his quest at the foundation of the ages. 363. But the being which is above creation, being separate from any idea of passage of time, is free from all temporal sequence; it sets out and declines from no such beginning to no end, by no conceivable kind of sequence. 364. When someone has traversed the ages and all that exists in them, the contemplation of the divine nature displays to his mind a sort of boundless ocean, and | it will give no sign to indicate any beginning for itself, if he tries to extend his conceptual grasp to what lies beyond. So the one who busies himself with what is senior to the ages, and who goes back to the beginning of existent things, will not be able to stop at any point in his reasoning, for his quarry will always slip away ahead and will indicate no place where his curiosity of intellect can stop.

365. It is an obvious point even to one who has modestly studied the nature of things, that | nothing is commensurable with the divine and blessed life. That life is not in time, but time comes from it. Creation however moves from certainly acknowledged beginning as it journeys towards its goal through all

periods of time. Hence it is possible to observe, as Solomon says somewhere, its “beginning and end and middle,”¹⁴⁰ which indicates through the temporal divisions the sequence of things in it. 366. But the transcendent and blessed life, having no accompanying timespan, has nothing to measure or assess it. All things that are made, being circumscribed by their own limits, are confined to their appropriate size by a sort of boundary as it pleased the wisdom of their Creator, in order to fit the design of the universe. 367. For this reason, although for the feebleness of human intellectual powers access to the things perceived in creation is unattainable, yet there is no question that all things are bounded by the power of their Creator and lie within creation’s limits. But the power that creates beings, which circumscribes within itself the nature of made things, itself has nothing to contain it, since it imprisons inside itself every thought which strives to go back to the beginning of the divine life, and quite surpasses every excessive and curious effort to reach the limit of the infinite. 368. Every backward movement and step of the mind once time has begun can only get far enough to see the impossibility of its quest. Time and things in this world seem to constitute a limit and term for the movement and activity of human reasoning, whereas what lies beyond them remains unattainable and inaccessible to reason, | clear of anything that can come within human grasp. 369. Where no shape is perceived, no place, no extent, no measure of time or other comprehensible feature, the comprehending power of mind, seeking to take hold of something like time and what is created in it, settles upon what is congenial and related to itself, slipping off every side of the inapprehensible nature. 136

370. It is known, I suppose, to everyone who has studied what exists, however modestly, that the Artificer of the universe lays down the ages of time and the space in them as a kind of room to receive things that come to be, | and in them he creates all things. It is not possible for anything that has been or is being made not to have its being absolutely in space and time. 371. But the self-sufficient, eternal nature, which encompasses the things that are, is in neither space nor time, but on the unspoken principle is perceived by faith alone as before and above these things, itself of itself, measured by no ages and concurring with no times, but standing by itself and constituted in itself, with no distinction in it matching past and future, for there is nothing beside it and external to it, by whose passage one thing passes and another approaches. 372. These experiences are proper to the things in creation, their life being divided between memory and expectation in accordance with temporal division. But to that high and blessed power, to which all things are always equally instan- 368M

140 *Wisd* 7,18.

taneously present, both what is past and what is awaited are seen to be firmly held by the power which embraces all.

137 373. | This then is the being in which “all things” (as the Apostle says) “are constituted,”¹⁴¹ and we who each have a part in existence “live and move and have our being.”¹⁴² It is before all beginning, it provides no tokens of its own nature, but is known only in being incomprehensible. This is in fact its most characteristic mark, that its nature is superior to every concept by which it might be recognized. 374. Creation therefore, because its principle is not the same as the uncreated, is distinguished by just this from comparison and community with its Maker: I mean, by the difference in being, and by the fact that it admits as proper to itself an account describing its nature, an account which has nothing in common with that of its Originator. 375. The divine nature, being alien to all the distinguishing features observed in creation, leaves behind it temporal divisions, “senior”, I mean, and “junior”, and spatial concepts, so that not even “higher” can properly be applied to it. For every thought that applies to the uncreated Power is “high” and is the first principle, and demands the name of “most authentic.”

376. It has been shown by what has been said that one should not look for the Onlybegotten Son and the Spirit of God in creation, but should believe them to be above creation. It follows that, whereas creation may perhaps be grasped at some appropriate starting-point through the assiduous curiosity of those who love such research, what lies beyond it would come no nearer being known by these means, since no marker point can be found in it before time began. 377. If therefore wonderful entities and names are contemplated, the Father, 138 the Son and the Holy Spirit, | how will it be possible to maintain that what the over-active and over-curious mind takes hold of in the case of things below, 369M making one thing earlier in comparison with another by some lapse of time, | applies also to uncreated and pretemporal being? 378. In the latter the Father is perceived as unbegotten and unbegun and for ever Father; from him directly and inseparably the Onlybegotten Son is simultaneously thought of with the Father; through him and with him, before any empty anhypostatic concept can intervene, the Holy Spirit is also immediately apprehended in close connexion, not falling short of the Son as far as existence is concerned, so that the Onlybegotten might ever be thought of apart from the Spirit, but himself having the cause of his being in the God of the universe; hence he is the onlybegotten Light

141 Col 1,17.

142 Acts 17,28.

which shone through the True Light,¹⁴³ not cut off from the Father or the Only-begotten either by interval or by otherness of nature. 379. No time-lapse affects the pretemporal nature, nor is there any difference of being. It is not possible to envisage a difference between one uncreated and another, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated, as has been shown in the previous discussion.¹⁴⁴

380. As these things are understood to be so by all who accept the elementary truth of the Gospel, what occasion is there for trying to use the creation to undo the bond between Father and Son, on the ground that something else must be is coeternal with it, or else that the Son is also of later origin? 381. For the generation of the Son is not within time, nor is the creation before time: it is therefore in no way right to divide up the inseparable nature, and to insinuate a | notion of interval in the middle of the Cause which makes everything, by saying that the one who gave being to all once was not. 382. Our previous statement is therefore true, that the eternity of the Son as begotten is conceived simultaneously with the unbegottenness of the Father. If there were thought to be any gap between, by which the begetting of the Son is cut off from the Father's life, then it will also determine the beginning of the life of the God over all, which is absurd. 383. But there is nothing to prevent the creation, which is something quite different in its own nature from its creator, from being thought of as from a particular starting-point, as we have said, since it in no way coincides with the absolute and pretemporal nature. To say that heaven or earth or any other part of the visible creation has come to be from things that are not, or (as the Apostle says) "from things that appear not,"¹⁴⁵ inflicts no dishonour on the Maker of the universe, since we have also learned from divine Scripture that these things do not exist from eternity nor abide for ever. 384. If however one of those reckoned by faith to be a member of the Holy Trinity were believed not always to subsist beside the Father, but, in terms of the heretical teaching, some idea were conceived which strips the God over all at some time of the glory of the Son and Holy Spirit, then God will be proved, in terms of the heretical teaching, to have been deprived of no less than every reality and concept that is good and divine. 385. But if the | Father who exists before time is always glorious, and the pretemporal Son is the glory of the Father, and if likewise the Spirit of Christ, which is for ever contemplated together with the Son and the Father, is the glory of Christ, what source, what kind of education, makes this clever fellow name a "senior" among the timeless and a "more honourable" among those by nature

139

372M

¹⁴³ Alluding to *Jn* 1,9.

¹⁴⁴ §§ 278–281.

¹⁴⁵ *Heb* 11,3.

140 honourable, elevating one in comparison with another, and by preferring one | taking honour from the next? It is surely obvious where the opposite of “more honourable” will lead.

xxvii 386–405. His suggestion that the same activities produce the same works, and that variation in works indicates varied activities, is nonsense¹⁴⁶

386. In similar terms Eunomius introduces what follows. He says, “Inasmuch as the same activities produce identical works, and varied works also reveal varied activities.”¹⁴⁷ The fine fellow has certainly reached the invincible argument for his position. “The same activities produce identical works,” he says. So let us apply the statement to the facts. Fire has one activity of making hot, but let us examine what similarity its works have. 387. Copper melts, clay hardens, wax dissolves, other living things if they fall in it are destroyed, but the salamander comes to life, tow is burnt, amianthus is washed by the flame as if with water. So much for the identity of works of the one activity! And what of the sun? Is it not the same as by the same power it warms everything alike? Yet it makes one plant grow, it burns up another, adjusting the result of its activity to the strength of the subject. 388. That on the rock it shrivels, while that with depth of earth it multiplies a hundredfold.¹⁴⁸ And if you come to the works of nature, and see what her skill produces in physical bodies, you would appreciate better how circumspect is one who says, “The same activity produces identical works.” 389. The cause is one activity of conception, but the combination of what is organized within takes many forms, so that one could hardly | count the different
141 qualities in the body. Again, the sucking of milk by babies is also one activity, but how could one list the variety of effects worked by such nourishment? 390. While the food makes its way from the mouth as if through a pipe to the channels where it is discharged, the power to change nature brings the milk to each part of the body appropriately, dividing the nourishment by digestion into countless varieties, producing what suits each one in conformity with the existing material. 391. From the same food are nourished arteries, veins, brain, brain tissue, marrow, bones, nerves, ligaments, sinews, flesh, surface tissue, cartilage, fat, hair, nails, sweat, vapours, phlegm, bile, and all the residues of superfluous

146 The MSS have the heading a couple of lines lower, before “The fine fellow”. Winling has it here.

147 Repeating text from § 153, but adding “also”.

148 Lk 8,6.8.

and unusable material that derive from the same source. 392. And if you were to name the parts of the body, the functioning parts and the sense-organs and the rest that constitute the body's bulk, | they diverge from one and the same feeding activity into so many varieties. Further, if one were to draw an analogy from skills, one would find there another test for the doctrine. In the case of those who make things with their hands, for the most part we see one activity for all skills, the movement, I mean, of the hand; but what the products have in common is questionable. 393. What has building a shrine in common with a tunic, though the skill in both cases operates by the movement of the hand? The thieving wall-digger uses his hand, and so does the well-digger; earth is mined and a man is slain. All are works done by manual movement. The warrior in the battle operates by hand to kill his enemies, and the peasant also uses his hand to break the sod with his mattock. 394. Why then does our dogmatist assert that "the same activities | produce identical works"?¹⁴⁹ But even if it is granted that there is some truth in the statement, once again the intimacy of being between the Son and the Father, and between the Spirit and the Son, is further confirmed. If there were any difference of activities, such that the Father achieved his purpose in one way, the Son in another, it would be right to infer from the difference of activities a difference of the being produced by each of them. 395. But the Son does everything in the same way as the Father is active, as the Lord himself says,¹⁵⁰ and reason dictates; for the one does not apparently work out his purpose incorporeally, the other corporeally, nor one with this kind of material, the other with that, nor one at one time or place, the other at another, nor do the differences between instruments used argue this diversity, 396. but a movement of will and direction of purpose is alone enough, since it has as its accompaniment and consequence for the realisation of what exists the power that gives all things reality; if this is so, and if in all things the Father, from whom are all things, and the Son, through whom are all things, act alike in the same kind of activity, why does Eunomius think that he can demonstrate the difference of being in the case of the Son and the Spirit on the basis of the difference between the divergent activities of the Son and of the Father? The argument goes the other way, as has been said: 397. no manner of variation of activities is observed between the Father and the Son, and the absence of divergence between the being of the Son and that of the Spirit is indicated by the identity of power to give existence. Our | author's own testimony confirms this argument word for word: "inasmuch as the same activities

149 See the passage quoted in §153 above.

150 *Jn* 5,19.

produce identical works.” 398. If therefore identity of works leads to similarity of activities, and the Son is as they say a work of the Father, and the Holy Spirit of the Son, the similarity between the Father’s activity and the Son’s will surely point to the identity of the being that is produced.

376M 399. His next point is, “Varied works reveal varied activities.” So let us then consider again for whom | this argument is valid; and, if we may, let us study these things with the aid of plain examples. Is not the activity of giving command one, viz. the activity of him who establishes the whole world and the things in it at his mere will? 400. “He spoke and they were made, he commanded and they were created.”¹⁵¹ Was not his command effected in all alike, and did not his mere purpose suffice to bring to being what was not? Why then, when such great difference is to be seen resulting from the one activity of command, does Eunomius say, as though he could not see the facts, that variation in works shows variety of activity? 401. Everything in the world would on the contrary have to be uniform, if, as our dogmatician says, variety in activities is displayed by diversity of works. Or does he see all these things as alike, and envisages unlikeness only in the Father and the Son?

144 402. It is now high time we observed the difference between elements, and how everything in the world that | contributes to the constitution of the universe points towards what is contrary to its nature. Some things are light and tend upwards, others are heavy and press downward. Some things stand still, others are constantly moving; and among the moving ones some move undeviatingly in one direction, like the sky and the planets, whose course turns back to repeat itself all over again, while others surging in all directions are continually in random movement, like the air, the sea and everything liquid. 403. Need one mention the opposition of heat to cold, the difference between wet and dry, the distance between high and low? And the natural dissimilarities between beasts, the variations between plants in shape and size, in fruits and characteristics, are surely beyond human telling. 404. But our clever fellow reveals to us that varied works also have varied activities. Either he has not learned the pattern of divine activity, as Scripture says, “At his word of command all things were made,”¹⁵² or else he is blind to the differences between the things that have come to be. That is how he lays down the law to us on divine doctrines with imprudent utterances: perhaps he has never been told that a mere assertion, if it is not absolutely certain and accepted in the subject under discussion, but the doctrine-maker just speaks with an air of authority on matters about which no

151 *Ps* 32/33,9.

152 *Heb* 1,3; *Ps* 32/33,9.

expert would agree, is no different from someone relating dreams or stories at a party. 405. Such is the | discordance of his words, that he resembles those who, 145
in the fantasy of a dream, think that they have seen something which waking they strongly desire, and they cling to the insubstantial, and, with their wish for the object convincing them through the false vision, they suppose that they have it. Just so, having imagined that these words are convincing to him in this dreamlike fabrication of doctrines, Eunomius affirms that it is so and attempts to argue what remains on this basis. It would be as well to set out what he says, as follows.

XXVIII 406–418. Eunomius’ suggestion that an invariable bond can be maintained by the harmony of the natures, is nonsense¹⁵³

406. “Since these are such, and in their relation to each other preserve the bond invariable, it is surely right that those who conduct their investigation in accordance with the order inherent in the realities, and do not insist on mixing and confusing everything together, if any dispute should arise about the beings, should base their belief about what is being demonstrated and the resolution of disputed points on the primary activities peculiar to the beings, and to resolve doubt about the activities with reference to the beings.”¹⁵⁴ 407. For my part, I reckon the irreligious words are enough in themselves to prove the absurdity of the statement. Just as someone giving a verbal description of the face disfigured by suffering would exhibit the disease better by removing the veils, so that those who see its appearance will not need to learn by word, so I reckon the hideous and mutilated character of the heretical doctrine will be quite apparent to perceptive souls merely by being exposed by reading. 408. But since one must use the word like a finger to point out the doctrinal corruption | in order 146
to make the mutilation inherent in that doctrine clear to most people, I shall again take up the statement step by step.

409. “Since these are such,” he says. What does the dreamer mean? What are “these” and what is their condition? Is he saying that the Father’s being is “alone authentic and highest,” the next as a consequence quite inauthentic and the third less authentic still? That is what he prescribes in what he said. 410. Or does he mean there is an activity accompanying the first being, of which the Onlybegotten Son is a product and work, bound by the limit of the activity

¹⁵³ Winling has the heading here. The MSS have it at § 407 or 412.

¹⁵⁴ Again quoting § 154.

which constituted him? Or that the beings are thought to be smaller and greater because they somehow fit into each other and the lesser one is contained by the more spacious, as happens with buckets that go inside each other, and in this way he perceives those beings which have no bound or limit to restrict them as greater and smaller? 411. Or that the diversities of artefacts reveal at the same time the difference of artificers, because it is impossible for different artefacts to be constructed by similar activities? Is there really anyone whose mental perceptions are so fast asleep that when he hears this kind of doctrine he will immediately agree with the assertion that “these things are such, and in their relation to each other preserve the bond invariable”? 412. It is equally lunatic, in my view, to say such things and to listen uncritically when someone says that things which are sundered from each other by unlikeness of nature are directed in their mutual relation by some bond. Either they are united in being as we teach, and thus in their relation to each other preserve the bond invariable, or else | they have parted from each other in | alienation of nature, as Eunomius supposes. What relation of bond will there be between the alienated to preserve the invariability? And what is that “order inherent in the realities,” corresponding to which he rules that the investigation must proceed? 413. If he had regard to the true doctrine, and reckoned the difference only by the order governing the realities believed to constitute the Holy Trinity, this “order inherent,” as he puts it, bringing about the unconfused distinction of the persons (*hypostases*), so that they are thought of as both mutually participating in terms of being and distinct in terms of *hypostasis*, he would surely not have joined the ranks of our opponents, since he would be saying those things which we also stand for.

414. In fact however his whole book takes the opposite view, and argues that understanding the order here envisaged by him is impossible. There is certainly a vast difference between what is done deliberately and what comes about automatically by some natural necessity. 415. Heat is a natural property of fire, luminosity of the sunbeam, fluidity of water, gravity of stone, and one could mention many similar instances. But if someone builds a house, or seeks office, or starts trading, or undertakes anything else that is achieved by forethought and preparation, one cannot in that case say any “order inherent” applies to what is done by them. The order comes about from the particular actions done to suit what the planner determines and what promotes the business in hand. 416. In this case therefore, since the heretical teaching splits the Son from natural affinity with the Father, and has the same opinion also of the Spirit as being estranged from | union with the Son and the Father, and in all his book argues that the Son is a work of the Father, and the Spirit likewise of the Son, and all are works of purpose, not products of nature, why does Eunomius decide that the work of will is some sort of “order inherent in the realities,” meaning I know

not what by this statement? Does he mean that the God of the universe manufactured this order for the Son and the Holy Spirit, and made the transcendence of the beings to be such that one is inferior to the other? 417. If he means that, why does he not clarify his statement, explaining the logical presuppositions by which he comes to know this about God? Or does he mean that his power will be shown to be greater by the limited scale of his works? But who will concede that a great cause and power is observed through the limited scale of its achievements? Then is it because he cannot bring about absolute perfection in the one that comes from him? But what evidence is that for his “highest and most authentic” status, if he shows his power to be less than his purpose? 418. Or does he tell us that the principle of perfection was never intended to apply to the one that comes from him, precisely so that the honour and glory of the one honoured for his supremacy be not diminished? But who is so meanminded that he will not | acquit even the divine and blessed nature of any imputation of feelings of envy? So what respectable reason is there for things having been arranged in this way by the God of the universe in the case of the Onlybegotten and the Spirit?

381M

XXIX 419–438. His idea of resolving ambiguity in the activities by reference to the beings, and vice versa, is nonsense¹⁵⁵

419. “Not from there,” he says. Where from, then, if “the order inherent” is envisaged for them as something they do not possess as by nature their own. Perhaps he refers to the inferiority of the being of the Son and the Spirit as the inherence of their order. But I demand to | know the reason for this too, whereby the Son is lessened in being, when both being and activity are found to possess the self-same characteristics and properties. 420. If the definition of being and activity is not the same, but each means something different, how can conclusions to discussions be reached on the basis of things strange and alien? It is as if in an argument about human nature, discussing whether man is a laughing animal or capable of literacy, someone took as an illustration to prove his point the construction of a house or ship, which the builder or shipwright built, and he were then to assert by this clever argument that we know the beings by the activities, and that the activity of a man is the house and the ship. 421. Is this then the way we learn, you silly thing, that man is broadnailed and able to laugh? “But,” someone would object, “the question is not whether man has a

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¹⁵⁵ The heading stands here in Winling; no MS evidence survives.

certain movement and activity, but what the activity itself essentially is. I am far from learning that from the answer.” 422. If I wanted to learn something about the wind, you would not give a satisfactory answer to my request by shewing me a sand-dune piled up by the wind, or a heap of chaff, or a scatter of dust. The explanation of wind is one thing, and those things pointed out instead of answering the question are something else. Why then does he show the beings by the activities, and present his account of the being of that which is, on the basis of what has been done by that which is?

150 423. Let us turn next to the question, what (the) work of the Father is, by which Eunomius says the being of the | one who has acted is apprehended.¹⁵⁶ He will of course say, “the Son,” if he says the usual things. But this Son, my clever fellow, by your account “matches the activity that produced him,”¹⁵⁷ and reveals only that; the question remains just as obscure, if indeed the activity is on your own testimony one of those things which follow the first being. 424. This activity is coextensive, so you say, with the work produced by it, and is manifested by its product, and all that is deduced from the work is, not what the activity is in its own nature, but only how much of it is observed in the work. Not all the smith’s ability is deployed when he makes the gimlet, but the skill of the craftsman operates only so much as is sufficient for the manufacture of the tool, though it is capable of fashioning many things and of all kinds. Similarly the one brought into being by the activity reveals the extent of the activity in himself. 425. But the question is not how much of the activity there is, but the
384M actual | being of the one who acted. On the same principle too, if he were to claim to have apprehended the nature of the Onlybegotten through the Spirit, which he calls a work of the activity which accompanies the Son, the argument has no substance; in this case also the activity is coextensive with the product, but does not by what has been fashioned reveal its own nature nor that of the one who is active.

151 426. Let us nevertheless concede this, too; let it be granted that the beings are known by the activities. Then the first being is recognized through the work it produces, and in the same way the work that comes from it reveals the second. So tell me, my scientific friend, what reveals the third, since no | such work of the third being is to be observed. If the beings are apprehended, as you say, by their activities, you will allow that the being of the Spirit is incomprehensible, since you cannot go a stage further, invoking a similar activity

156 It is difficult to find this exact wording in what Gregory quotes of Eunomius, but he is probably discussing words quoted in §152, as in what follows here.

157 See §152 above.

for him and from that deducing the nature of the Spirit. 427. Either show us a substantive work of the Spirit, by which you claim to apprehend the being of the Spirit, or else your whole spider-web will collapse on contact with reason. If the being is recognized by the subsequent activity as your argument says, and there is no substantive work of the Spirit, as you allege the Son is of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, the being of the Spirit is thereby acknowledged to be quite unascertainable and incomprehensible, since no activity that can be concretely (*kath' hypostasin*) thought of allows a glimpse of it. 428. But if the Spirit evades apprehension, how can the superior being be apprehended through the one that is not apprehended? If the work of the Son is unknown, that is, on his showing, the Spirit, then the Son would surely be unknowable too, obscured by the obfuscation of his indicator; and if the being of the Son eludes us in this way, how will the "highest and most authentic" being be revealed by the one that eludes, when the obscurity of the Spirit has been transmitted backwards through the Son to the Father? It follows that there is clear proof that on our opponents' own evidence the being of the Father is absolutely beyond apprehension. 429. How is it then that our sharp-eyed friend, who sees the insubstantial, both sees the nature of the invisible and incomprehensible ones through each other, and urges us on, claiming that the beings are apprehended through the works and the works through the beings?

430. | Let us also explore the next argument, where he claims to resolve doubt about the activities by reference to the beings.¹⁵⁸ How is one to get him away from futile notions back to human reason? Does he think it is possible to resolve doubts about the activities by apprehension of the beings? How can he bring certainty out of doubt through things not understood? 431. If the being is apprehended, what need is there to investigate the activity, as if we were likely thereby to get nearer understanding the matter in question? But if it is necessary to enquire into the activity with the object of being led thereby to an insight into the being that is active in it, how will the as yet unknown nature be able to resolve for us the doubt about the activities? 432. | On every doubtful matter conclusions are reached by starting with acknowledged truths. When the uncertainty lies equally in both the points in question, how can Eunomius claim to apprehend through each other things in themselves unknown? 433. When the Father's being is in doubt, he says the question is elucidated by the activity which accompanies him and the work produced by that. Then when what constitutes the being of the Onlybegotten is in question, which he refers

¹⁵⁸ See the end of §154.

to as either an activity or a product of the activity (he uses both terms), he says that it is easy to resolve the disagreement about the Onlybegotten with reference to the being of his Maker.

153 434. There is something else I would like him to tell me. Is it only in the case of divine nature that he says that doubt about the activities is resolved by reference to the being that was active, or does he also, in the case of every thing with which some creative power subsists, | recognize the nature of the things made through the being of the maker? If he asserts this doctrine only in the case of the divine power, let him show how he resolves the dispute about the works of God through the nature of the one who was active. 435. Surely an indubitable work of God is sky, earth, sea, and all the world. Let us suppose the being of one of these is being investigated, and that the sky is the subject of rational consideration. Since the being of the sky is in doubt owing to the various opinions about it among scientists, who each give a different account of it according to their opinion, how does consideration of the one who made the sky bring us a resolution of our doubt on the subject? The Creator is immaterial, invisible, without shape, unbegotten and for ever abiding, remaining immune to decay, change, variation and all such things. 436. How then will one who has accepted such an idea of the one who was active be led on to the knowledge of the nature of the sky? How will he pass from invisible to visible, from incorruptible to what is subject to decay, from unbegotten being to what is constituted in time, from what always abides to what has acquired temporal existence, and frame his notion of the matter in question on the basis of all that is contrary to it? 437. Let him tell us, this meticulous student of beings, let him tell us how it is possible for naturally dissimilar things to be known through each other. Yet by these very things he says himself, if he had known how to follow his own logic, he would have been led to agree with the Church's doctrine. 438. If the nature of the maker shows what has been made by it, as Eunomius says, and the Son is as they say a thing made by the Father, surely the one who has considered the Father's nature also knows through it that of the Onlybegotten, if indeed the
154 nature of the one who was active indicates what the action achieved. So on | this argument the <case> they <present> for dissimilarity <...>¹⁵⁹

159 Jaeger identified a lacuna between the middle of this sentence and the beginning of § 439 below, which appears to belong to chapter xxxi. The end of chapter xxix and the whole of xxx are lost. We have however some indications of what the missing paragraphs contained. First there is the chapter heading xxx, which corresponds to nothing in the surviving Greek text. It is clear that the text starting § 439 forms part of chapter xxxi. We have also two quotations, preserved in the Syriac version of a controversial writing of Peter of Callinicum, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch AD 581–591, and now published in *Corpus Chris-*

xxx There is no divine word commanding such researches; including an argument on the futility of philosophizing on these things.

438a. To want to help everybody was not, apparently ...

438b. [Petr. Call. *C. Dam.* 3 XLIX] (After first setting down the blasphemer's words, "The kind of similarity to be sought,"¹⁶⁰ Gregory says,)

By whom does he say it is to be sought? What command, what scriptural law has made the search necessary? Does not wisdom clearly forbid search into matters too profound¹⁶¹ and enquiry into matters too difficult and being wise in inessentials? Paul says and testifies in the Lord to everybody who is on our side that we should "not think things higher than we ought to think,"¹⁶² not because he despised wisdom, but because he rejects our over-much extending ourselves through contemplating an enquiry into things incomprehensible. 438c. Isaiah, more clearly than the rest, proclaims the impossibility of such an investigation, by calling his generation ineffable.¹⁶³ Indeed all the words of the divinely inspired Scripture which figuratively teach us "the mystery of godliness,"¹⁶⁴ lay down the law that we ought not to enquire about things incomprehensible.

tianorum Series Graeca 35 and 54 (see R.Y. Ebied—A. Van Roey—L.R. Wickham (eds.), *Petri Callinicensis patriarchae Antiocheni tractatus contra Damianum. III, Libri tertii capita XX–XXXIV*, Turnhout 1998; R.Y. Ebied—A. Van Roey—L.R. Wickham (eds.), *Petri Callinicensis patriarchae Antiocheni tractatus contra Damianum. IV, Libri tertii capita XXXV–L et addendum libro secundo*, Turnhout—Leuven 2003).

The longer of these fragments, in Peter's chapter XLIX, 107–149 (CCSG 54, 418–423), in my judgment precedes the shorter one in Peter's chapter XXI, 201–219 (CCSG 35, 44). The longer extract conforms more nearly to the first part of the chapter-heading xxx, the shorter to the latter part.

Peter quotes before each of his two passages the opening words of Gregory's chapter xxx, and these words are here included after the chapter heading.

The English version of Peter of Callinicum is reproduced unchanged, apart from some punctuation marks, footnotes and the section numbers § 428a, etc.

160 In § 461 (also § 463) below Gregory takes up words of Eunomius, which he has not apparently cited previously: "because the mode of generation is indicated by the natural rank of the one who generated" (διὰ τὸ τῇ φυσικῇ τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἀξίᾳ δεικνυσθαι τὸν τῆς γεννήσεως τρόπον). It is reasonable to assume that this clause was also part of what Gregory quoted here, especially if one recognizes that "kind of similarity" in the English version of the Syriac probably represents the same Greek original as "mode of likeness" in my version of Gregory.

161 Perhaps a reference to *Eccles* 7,16.

162 *Rom* 12,3.

163 *Is* 53,8 in the Greek version says, "His generation who can recount?"

164 *1 Tim* 3,16.

For what the divine teaching says is, as it were, a limit of our duties. So by what necessity has he sought “the kind of similarity,” there being no saint who had counselled any concern for such things? 438d. For had it occurred to the prophets or patriarchs or the Lord’s disciples to give any consideration to these matters, it would not have been absurd for us too to be zealous for the same things in a like search for a similitude; although even so it would have been superfluous to search again into what has been searched into already, and we should have been right to stick by what was known before. But if the object of their concern seemed beyond even their comprehension and thus the search itself vain (their incapacity for the object of their search indicating its incomprehensibility), solicitude, therefore, in these matters is superfluous and useless in both cases, whether the object desired was sought by saints, or unsought. For if anything useful had come about from this search, the saints, who exhort us to enquire even into “the deep things of God” through the Spirit,¹⁶⁵ would not have disregarded these essentials. 438e. To whom after them, then, will be revealed what was too high for prophetic revelation and knowledge by the apostles? But I do know the necessity which constrains them to ask after such things. For, in my judgement, there is no other cause for such an investigation except their desire to convert the contentious to them by the outlandishness of their teaching. For had they held to the wonted doctrine of the fathers, in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel and the Apostles, they would have had no occasion for being known more than other people.

(...)

438f. [Petr. Call. *C. Dam.* 3 XXI] (We recollect wise Gregory of Nyssa who ... says,)

So if some impiety which we should shun has become immediately obvious to everybody from what is said, and besides the impiety the baselessness of its design, it might be thought superfluous to make a detailed stand against each point. But because many, having adhered without examination to what has been said, “ere they perceive the thorns of the word” (to speak like the Psalmist¹⁶⁶) “have been swallowed up by wrath” (meaning that they would not have been swept away so much, as by a flood, into this depth of impiety, unless they had thought something in these arguments invincible and irresistible), it is wholly necessary that we should not surrender the truth through any negligence even though we need to rebut the argument by many words. So let us take up each point again. (...)

¹⁶⁵ 1 Cor 2,10.

¹⁶⁶ See the Greek version of Ps 57/58,10.

XXXI 439–445. The consideration of providence is enough for knowledge of the identity of being

439. (...) disentangle¹⁶⁷ the Onlybegotten from the works of providence. Let there be no curiosity about the begetting, neither let there be a forced deduction from it of the dissimilarity of the Onlybegotten. | Difference of purposes is sufficient in itself to make clear the diversity of nature. 440. Since the first being is allowed even by our opponents to be simple, one must necessarily think of the purpose as coinciding with the nature, and since the good purpose is demonstrated through providence, the nature from which the purpose comes is also demonstrated to be good. But if only the Father is active in good things, and the Son does not purpose the same—I speak hypothetically for the benefit of my opponents—, then the difference in being would be obvious on the evidence of the variety of purposes. 441. But if the Father of all provides, and the Son also similarly provides—for what he sees the Father doing, the Son does similarly—, the identity of purposes surely indicates the shared nature of those who have identical purposes. Why then is the argument from providence despised, as making no contribution to the question? 442. Yet many ordinary instances strongly support our case, instances I mean from what is familiar to everybody. Someone who has seen the light of fire, and has come to experience its power to heat, if | he approaches another such light and such heat, he will obviously be led to the thought of fire, the similarity of things apparent to his perception persuading him of the affinity of the nature which produced them. Nothing would perform exactly as fire does if it were not fire. 443. Thus if we observe the same providence attributed alike and equally to the Father and the Son, by means of things we already know we surmise about those which surpass our understanding: we assume that what is alien in nature would not be apprehended in equal and similar actions; for surely the same relation which prevails between the outward characteristics which each manifests, must also prevail between the subjects. 444. If the characteristics are opposed, surely what they reveal must also be reckoned opposites; if they are the same, what they reveal will not be different. Just as the Lord says figuratively that the fruits are the signs of the nature of the trees, so that they do not vary in their nature, nor do they match good with bad nor conversely unpleasant with pleasant—by their fruits, he says, trees are recognized—,¹⁶⁸ so also where the fruit of providence shows no difference, we see the nature which grew these fruits also as one,

167 The Greek text starts again here, in mid-sentence.

168 *Mt* 7,16.

even though the fruit is borne by different trees. 445. Therefore things know-
 156 able by our intelligence—and the idea of providence applying in the same way
 to Father and Son is knowable by us—| put beyond doubt the similarity and
 community of nature between the Onlybegotten and the Father, made known
 by the identity of the fruits of providence.

**XXXII 446–459. The proposition, “The mode of generation follows the
 mode of likeness,” is unintelligible¹⁶⁹**

389M 446. To avoid this thought, apparently under some necessary compulsion, he
 claims that he “turned away from the works of providence, | and went back
 to the mode of generation, because the mode of likeness follows,” he says,
 “the mode of generation.” What ineluctable logic! How forcefully the abundant
 rhetorical skill compels agreement to the proposition! “The mode of likeness,”
 he says, “follows the mode of generation.” 447. The statement is so skilful and
 exact! So if a mode of generation is known, the mode of likeness will be simulta-
 neously demonstrated. Since therefore the mode of generation is the same in all
 or nearly all animals that reproduce physically, and according to these people
 the mode of likeness follows the mode of generation, all the things reproduced
 in the same way will surely be similarly related to those similarly generated.¹⁷⁰
 448. If then the mode of generation, as the heretical teaching says, makes the
 young resemble itself, yet it differs not at all in the many different species of
 157 beasts, but is the same in most of them, then this general and unqualified |
 statement will be found to lead to the conclusion that they are all like each
 other because of the likeness of their generation, man, dog, camel, mouse, ele-
 phant, leopard and the rest which reproduce in the same manner. 449. Or does
 he say that things similarly born are not like each other, but that each is like that
 alone from which it gets its origin? But if what he meant to say was he should
 have declared the young to be like the parent, not the mode of likeness like
 the mode of generation. 450. What is reasonable and apparent in nature, that
 the begotten is like its begetter, is something he rejects, to prevent his argument

169 Winling places the heading here; the MSS have it after the first quotation in § 446. The heading itself includes an error: it reverses Eunomius’ argument as described and refuted in §§ 446–459 below. It should read: ‘The proposition, “The mode of likeness follows the mode of generation,” is unintelligible.’ This mistake in the heading may be original, or may be the result of scribal error.

170 Most MSS add a clause here: ‘For things which are like the same thing are like each other.’ Jaeger deletes this as a marginal gloss.

turning completely against him. If he were saying that the young is like the parent, he was proving that his laborious case for the unlikeness of the beings has disappeared to nothing.

451. But in fact he says that “the mode of likeness follows the mode of generation.” To those able to consider the meanings of words with any accuracy this must surely appear utterly unintelligible. What we are to understand when we hear “mode of generation” is very puzzling. Does he mean the shape of the parent animal, its urge, its attitude, the place, the time, or the maturing of the foetus during pregnancy? Or is he referring to the genital parts themselves? Or does he mean none of these, but some other aspect of generation? And how are we to know what he does mean? 452. The indeterminacy and vagueness of the word “mode” (*tropos*) makes us quite uncertain of the sense; everything comes equally within its meanings and is in each case equally irrelevant to the subject. Similarly we suspect his expression | “mode of likeness”, baldly put, to be devoid of any meaning when we refer to the instances of things we know in everyday life. 453. What is born does not resemble the form or the mode of its birth. In animal generation birth is bodily separation, | which brings into the open the animal that was perfected by formation in the entrails, but what is born is man or horse or calf or whatever it is that arises by the generative process. 454. How then the mode of likeness of what is born follows the mode of generation, let Eunomius himself tell us, or someone trained by him in obstetrics. Birth is one thing, the result of birth another, and the idea is in each case different. 158 392M

That the saying is false therefore as applied to things physically born, no sensible person would deny. 455. But if he calls making and preparation a “mode of generation,” which he says the mode of likeness of the one being produced follows, the argument is even so very improbable. We may test it with the following examples. Iron is struck with blows as it is shaped by the smith into something of practical use. 456. How the shape of the mattock, if that is what it is, resembles the hand of the craftsman or the mode of preparation, such as hammers, coals, bellows, and anvil, by which the smith got it into shape, it is impossible to say. And what has been said about one example applies to everything manufactured by some process, because what is made in no way resembles the mode of its generation. 457. What has the shape of the dress got in common with the woof or the | combs or the shuttle or generally with the mode of the weaver’s trade? Or what has the bench in common with woodwork? Or any other product with the shape of its maker? 159

458. Where visible and physical things are concerned I think that this case is superfluous and that even my opponents will agree. One might still have to consider whether it contributes anything to the argument for the blasphemy. What then was the question? It is whether the Son should be confessed to be

related to the Father as like in being or as unlike, and since he could not, he says, discover this from the ideas of providence, he had gone back to the mode of generation, so as to learn, not whether the one begotten is like the one who begot him, but whether some mode of likeness is; and because this is unknown to most people, he sets to work on the being that begot. Has he then forgotten his own rules, in which he says that the beings must be apprehended from the works?¹⁷¹ 459. If then it has not yet been made plain what is the natural state of the generated being, which he calls a work of the transcendent being, how does he manage to rise above what is in his words lower and therefore more accessible to the understanding of enquirers, and get hold of the “most authentic and highest” being? Having argued in his own work that he has detailed knowledge of the divine words, he now takes little account of them, as if he did not know that it is impossible to arrive at knowledge of the Father except by approaching through the Son? “No one,” | it says, “knows the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.”¹⁷²

XXXIII 460–473. Eunomius’ statement, that the mode of generation is indicated by the natural rank of the one who generates, is nonsense

393M 460. | Eunomius however, while he may intend to slander devout ideas which befit the deity of the Onlybegotten, speaks of him literally as less, but in his view of the knowledge of divine things he unknowingly argues a greater status for him, if indeed he takes the being of the Father as more readily understood, and tries through it to trace and compute the being of the Son also.

461. So he ascends to the generating being and through it surveys the generated, “because,” he says, “the mode of generation is indicated by the natural rank of the one who generated.”¹⁷³ Once more this remark, being simply thrown out loosely and without qualification over everything indiscriminately, is calculated to confuse the mind of the enquirer. The views propounded are generally of such a kind that their concepts apply to everything and no exception is made to the inclusive statement. 462. Surely then, if the mode of generation really is known by the natural rank of the one who begets, and the differences between

¹⁷¹ Apparently a reference to one part of Eunomius’ argument in §154.

¹⁷² *Mt* 11,27.

¹⁷³ Gregory has not quoted these words before in the surviving Greek text. We indicated above that they may have stood in the lost passage referred to in 438b above. Eunomius’ argument would lead him to conclude that the status of the Father (unbegotten) ruled out likeness to the begotten Son at an essential point.

parents in rank are many and they are recognized by many designations (birth applies to Jew, Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman),¹⁷⁴ what does the argument deduce from this?—that however many differences there are between parents in natural ranks, there will presumably be as many modes of generation. Consequently generation does not take place in the same way for all, but the natures vary in accordance with the rank of the parents, and for each of those which produce offspring a peculiar | mode of generation must be invented to match the difference in order of rank. 463. There must surely be inherent ranks which apply to each one individually, but differing one from another as higher or lower, according to the way in which each is affected by race, status, religion, nationality, power, slavery, wealth, poverty, authority or subjection—, all those things which bring about those lifetime differences of rank. If therefore, as Eunomius says, “the mode of generation is indicated by the natural rank of the one who generates,” and differences in rank are many, 464. surely the modes of generation will, according to our dogmatician, be many too, and one will be born one way, one another, the difference in rank dictating to nature the kind of birth. 161

465. Should he not accept that such ranks are natural, as falling outside the scope of nature, we shall not contradict. But he will surely concede that humanity is separated by a quite natural distinction of rank from irrational life. Yet the mode of birth shows no variation in spite of the difference of natural rank, since nature brings both rational and irrational creatures into life by birth in the same way. 466. But if he refers the inherent ranking only to that being which is, as he calls it, “most authentic and highest,” let us see what he has in mind in saying this. In our teaching, inherent in God as marks of rank | are deity itself, wisdom and power, and being good, judge, just, mighty, patient, true, creator, sovereign, invisible and unending, and all the other honorific terms which are used by the divinely inspired scripture, all of which | we say are attributed correctly and properly to the onlybegotten Son; we recognize a difference only in the idea that he is without beginning, and we do not deprive the Onlybegotten of that in all its senses. 396M 162

467. Let no one twist our words maliciously as if we were trying to prove that the true Son is unbegotten. We declare those who say such things to be quite as irreligious as those who teach doctrines of unlikeness. But since the idea of beginning is ambiguous and has many meanings, there are occasions, we say, when one may allow the title of Unbegun to the onlybegotten Son. 468. When the idea arising from the word “unbegun” is that of existing (having *hypostasis*) without a cause, we confess this as proper to the Father

174 Echoing Paul's list in *Col* 3.11.

alone as ingenerately being. But when attention is turned to the other meanings of “beginning”, since a beginning is also attributed to creation, time and order, in that case we claim for the Onlybegotten that he too transcends beginning; hence we believe the one by whom all things were made to be beyond any beginning of creation or concept of time or sequential order. 469. So the one who with regard to existence (*hypostasis*) is not without beginning, in all other respects is confessed as possessing the status of Unbegun, and while the Father is both Unbegun and Unbegotten, the Son is unbegun in the way described, but is nevertheless not unbegotten.

163 470. What kind of inherent token of the Father’s rank is Eunomius considering when he uses it to work out the mode of generation? He will of course say, “Ingeneracy.” Accordingly, if we say that all the names by which we have learned to glorify the God of the universe are just idle and meaningless, then the enumeration of such expressions, | set out merely as a list, is superfluous and irrelevant, if it is true that none of these other titles describes the natural rank of the one above. 471. But if each of the expressions is recognized as having a specific meaning appropriate to the concept of God, then clearly the honourable ranks inherent in God correspond to the list of names, and thereby the likeness of the beings¹⁷⁵ follows logically, if indeed the inherent tokens of rank indicate the underlying realities. 472. But since the tokens of rank appear the same in each of them, the identity of being of the realities to which those ranks are attributed is plainly demonstrated. If one difference of title is reckoned enough to indicate distinctness of being, how much more will the identity of so many titles argue for community of nature! 473. For what reason are the remaining names ignored, and the begetting is inferred from one alone? And why do they 397M | apply Ingeneracy to the Father as his only inherent token of rank, rejecting the others? It is so that by its contradiction of “begotten” they may impair the mode of likeness, a move which when scrutinized at a suitable point will itself be found to be quite as limp, insubstantial and worthless as what precedes.

XXXIV 474–503. An account of Eunomius’ attacks on the *homoousion* and a critique of his statements¹⁷⁶

474. That all his arguments have this object in view, is shown by what follows. There he takes credit for rightly following that path in support of blasphemy, for

175 That is, the being of the Father and that of the Son.

176 Winling, following the MSS, puts this heading before § 483. In view of the material discussed in §§ 474–480, it is better here.

not immediately exposing the purpose of his work, nor before the deceitful case was assembled thrusting his impiety on ears as yet unattuned, nor specifying in the prologue to his work unbegottenness of being, and for constantly referring to otherness of being. | His precise words are these: 475. "Or ought we to have begun, as Basil decrees, with the very points in dispute, speaking in isolation of the Unbegotten Being and constantly referring to otherness or sameness of being?" On this subject he traverses much ground with mockery, reproaches and insults—our philosopher is skilled at defending his own doctrines that way—and again takes up the argument, confronting his adversary and laying the blame on him for what he is saying in words to this effect: 476. "For you above all are guilty of these errors, since you have attributed the same being to the Begetter and to the Begotten. Consequently ridicule for these things is an inescapable trap you have laid for yourselves, since justice seems to base the verdict against you on your own words. 477. For either you suppose that without beginning these beings are distinct from each other, and by putting one of them into the class of Son through a begetting, and in contending that the one who is without beginning was generated by the one who is, you are subject to your own ridicule—since to the one you imagine to be unbegotten you also attribute begetting by another—, or else by confessing one single unbegun Being, and then delimiting this into Father and Son by the begetting, you will say that the unbegotten Being has itself been begotten by itself." 164

478. As to the things written before the words cited, I shall ignore them, as containing mere abuse of our teacher and father,¹⁷⁷ | and contributing nothing to the task in hand. But in the words quoted, since he has dreadfully sharpened against us both sides of these double-edged refutations, and propounds them by the dilemmas he has invented, we also are obliged not to accept in silence his assault upon doctrine, but to support it in verbal fight so far as we are able, and to show that this terrible two-edged sword, which he has whetted against the truth, is flimsier than a sketched picture. 165

479. He uses two ideas to criticize the sharing of being: he says that either we take two unbegotten principles coextensive with each other and call one Father, the other Son, | saying that he who is was generated by him who is; or else a being conceived as one and the same has a part-share in both names, both being Father and coming to be as Son, as it is itself produced by itself through begetting. 480. I write these things in my own words, not to twist his meaning, but to correct the bombast and exaggeration of his language, so that his intention may be readily discerned by all, being unveiled by clarifying the expression. 400M

177 Basil.

481. The one who taunts us with ignorance and alleges that we have come to the debate with insufficient preparation, so delicately fashions his own writing with brilliant style, so “finely lines the words” (as he expresses it), adorning his account with this speech surpassing fair, as immediately to seize the | hearer with delight at the words. Such, along with many others, are the words just read in introduction. You may like to have them read again: “Consequently ridicule for these things is an inescapable trap you have laid for yourselves, since justice seems to base the verdict against you on your own words.”

482. See the flowers of ancient Attica! How sparkles in the work’s composing an easy brilliance of style! With what elegance and variety he wreathes its verbal beauty! But be that as it may, it is for us to turn again to the meaning of the statements; and let us attend, if we may, to the rhetorician’s very words: 483. “For either you suppose that without beginning these beings are distinct from each other, and by putting one of them into the class of Son through a begetting, and in contending that the one who is without beginning has been generated by the one who is ...” That is enough! He alleges that we revere two unbegotten beings. 484. How can he say that, when he also accuses us of mixing and confusing everything through confessing that the being is one? If indeed our doctrine did also acknowledge two natures alien in being from each other in the same way as the teachers of *anomoion* (unlikeness), it would be right for the separation of nature to be seen as implying the idea of two principles. But if it is in different *hypostases* that one nature is confessed by us and the Father is acknowledged and the Son glorified, how can such a doctrine be alleged by its opponents to postulate two principles? 485. Next | he tells us that one of these two principles is reduced by us to the class of Son, and that he who is has been generated by him who is. Let him point out the champion of this view, and we shall be quiet, whether he convicts some person of voicing these things, or whether he knows this argument to be current in church gatherings. Who could be so far adrift in his ideas and out of his wits as first to say that the Father is also Son, secondly to think of two Unbegottens, and thirdly to consider the One to have been generated by the One? What necessity forces doctrine towards such suppositions? By what arguments of his has it been established, that this absurdity necessarily arises? 486. If he were putting forward something held by us, and then used it to produce | such an allegation either by sophistry or by force of argument, there would perhaps be occasion to advance such things to the disparagement of doctrine. But if there is not, nor ever could be, in the Church any such statement, and no one is convicted of saying it or any one named as having heard it, nor does any logical necessity appear to require this absurdity, I fail to see what his shadow-boxing is for. 487. It is as if a man beside himself with brain-fever were to think he was wrestling with someone when he had no

adversary, and then having vigorously thrown himself down were to take himself for his rival. Something like that has happened to our astute rhetorician, who fabricates ideas, which we do not acknowledge, and wrestles with shadows, which he has invented in his own imagination.

488. Let him tell us by what necessity the one who confesses the Son to have been begotten from the Father is driven to the concept of two Unbegottens. Or who is more likely to argue for two Unbegottens, the one who argues that “Son” is a pseudonym, or the one who | asserts that his nature confirms his title? 489. He that rejects the true begetting of the Son, but concedes that he certainly exists, might more appropriately be suspected of calling unbegotten one who is, but does not receive his being by begetting. If someone defines the identifying characteristic of the personal existence (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten precisely in terms of his existing (*hypostenai*) by begetting from the Father, how could he be brought to think of him as unbegotten? 490. Yet from your clever point of view, as long as it prevails that the Son was not begotten from the Father, in one sense of the word “unbegotten” he will correctly be termed “unbegotten”. For while some things are produced by birth, others by construction, there is no reason why we should not say that what exists other than by begetting exists unbegottenly, in terms simply of the meaning of begetting. 491. Yet this is what your own account of the Lord argues, when it defines him as a creature. So on your own showing, you subtle ones, the Onlybegotten will by such logic be named Unbegotten, and not by our teaching, and “justice,” what you yourself call justice, “will be found to base the verdict against you on your own words.”

492. We have occasion, when their arguments are so foul, to spit on their disgusting doctrine. Certainly the other horn of what he presents as a dilemma is just as mad. “Or else,” he says, “by confessing one single unbegun Being, and then delimiting this into Father and Son by the begetting, you will say that the unbegotten Being has itself been begotten by itself.” 493. Once again, what kind of amazing new statement is this? How can anyone be begotten by himself, | having himself for father and being his own son? What seasickness, what utter frenzy, that they turn their whole edifice upside down?¹⁷⁸ It is what drunkards do when they believe and shout and insist that the ground is not firm under them, that the walls are receding, that | everything is going round and round, and that things they see have no stability. 494. So perhaps the author had his soul in such a turbulent state when he wrote, and we ought to pity him for what he wrote rather than abominate him. Who is so innocent of the divine

178 Literally, “turn their roof to the bottom and the floor overhead.”

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404M

doctrines, who is so distant from the Church's mysteries, as to allow such criticism of the faith? Or rather, perhaps it is a small thing to say something to the effect that no one has ever imputed this absurdity to the faith. 495. But who, in the case of the human race, or of anything else among things perceived by sense, when he hears of their common being, either assumes that all those things which are classed together in terms of being are without beginning, or says that it is produced by itself and at once gives birth to itself and begets itself?

170 496. The first man and the one sprung from him, though they get their being in a different way from each other, the one by the coupling of parents, the other by shaping from the dust, are both believed to be two and in terms of being are not split from each other; yet it is not said that they are two beings without beginning coextensive with each other, or that the one that is is begotten by the one that is; nor were those once two considered to be one by such | verbal conjuring that each is thought of as his own father and his own son. Both former and latter are human, and the word for their being is the same for them both: each is mortal, and rational too, and similarly capable of thought and knowledge. 497. If then the word for humanity is not altered in the case of Adam and Abel by the change in the way they are generated, since neither the order nor the manner of their coming to be imports any change in nature, but by the common consent of sober men their state is the same, and no one would deny this unless he is badly in need of hellebore,¹⁷⁹ what necessity is there to argue this unreasonable conclusion in the case of the divine nature?

498. When we heard from the Truth about Father and Son, we learned the unity of nature in the two subjects, the relation to each other being signified naturally, both by the names and also by the very voice of the Lord. 499. He who says, "I and the Father are one,"¹⁸⁰ can only be showing by the acknowledgement of the Father that he is not unbegun, and indicating by his unity with the Father the community of being. He intends, I believe, that by this statement the word of faith might be kept free from perversion by either heresy: Sabellius would have no room to bring the individuality of the *hypostases* into confusion, when the Onlybegotten manifestly distinguishes himself from the Father by saying, "I and the Father;" and Arius would not be able to argue foreignness of nature, when the unity of the two does not admit the distinction of nature. 500.
171 What is | signified in this saying by the unity which applies to the Father and Son can only be unity of being itself. The other good qualities, which are seen to

179 Hellebore was in ancient times used as a drug to treat mental illness.

180 Jn 10,30.

belong to the nature, one might without error say are available to all, including those originated by creation. Thus | the Lord is said by the prophet to be “pitiful and merciful.”¹⁸¹ 501. At the same time the Lord wants us to become and to be called the same: “Be pitiful,”¹⁸² “Blessed are the merciful,”¹⁸³ and so forth. If then someone by scrupulous obedience has become like the divine will, and has become good, or pitiful and merciful, or meek and lowly of heart, as many of the saints are attested to have been in previous times, are they therefore one with God, or because of any of these attributes conjoined with him? That is not possible. What is not in every respect the same cannot be one with him who is by nature different. 502. One human being becomes one with another, when by conscious purpose they are, as the Lord puts it, “perfected into one,”¹⁸⁴ the natural bond adding to itself the unity of purpose. The Father and the Son are also one, the community of being and of purpose coalescing into unity. But if they were combined in will alone and divided in nature, how could he claim for himself unity with the Father, when separated in the most important respect? 405M

503. Having heard therefore that “I and the Father are one,”¹⁸⁵ we have been taught by his voice both that the Lord has a Cause and that the Son and the Father are indistinguishable in nature, not | blurring together our conception of them into one *hypostasis*, but preserving distinct the individuality of the *hypostases*, without dividing the unity of being as we do with the persons, so that in our account of the beginning no suggestion may arise of two heterogeneous realities, and thus the Manichean teaching gain entrance. 172

XXXV 504–529. An argument that the Anomean doctrine tends towards Manicheism¹⁸⁶

504. Created and uncreated are diametrically opposed to each other in meaning. So if the two are set up as first principles, Manicheism will have insinuated perniciously into the Church of God. I say these things in the course of my serious examination of the over-officious work of my opponents. 505. No one is likely to deny that this view may be reasonably propounded: if the created is

¹⁸¹ *Ps* 102/103,8.

¹⁸² *Lk* 6,36.

¹⁸³ *Mt* 5,7.

¹⁸⁴ *Jn* 17,23.

¹⁸⁵ *Jn* 10,30.

¹⁸⁶ Winling has the heading here. The MSS mark it one sentence later.

just as powerful as the uncreated, then the foreign nature will somehow oppose what is dissimilar to itself in being, and, as long as the power of neither fails, the two will part into discordant conflict with each other. It is totally necessary that purpose should be congruent with and correspond with nature, and that if they are in nature unlike, their wills will be unlike too. 506. If the power is sufficient on both sides, neither will weaken in its urge to fulfil its own will. And if each is as strong as it intends to be, supremacy will become a cause of contention between the two, as it advances in full power against its opponent. 507. Thus the Manichean teaching will slip in, two things mutually opposed having appeared in our account of the beginning, each being divided by the difference of nature and purpose from its opposite; and their | argument for diminution ends up as a principle of Manichean doctrine. Discordance of being, | as the discussion has indicated, leads to the doctrine of two first principles divided as created and uncreated.

408M
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508. Most people perhaps will criticize these words as depending on a forced and absurd argument, and will demand that they be not included at all with the rest of what is written. So be it; we ourselves do not deny it. It was not our own desire, but we were led by our opponents to turn from the sequence of thought into such a digression. But if we are not to say these things, then silence should much earlier have suppressed our opponents' words, which provided the provocations to such a response. No other course is open to one who argues against perversity, than to demolish the argument opposing him. 509. But I would like to advise those in this position to stand a little apart from controversy, and not to defend too enthusiastically the views which they have already adopted beforehand, nor to look for every possible opportunity to get the better of their opponents, but, since life is at stake in the contest, to rely only on what is profitable, and allow truth to prevail. If anyone is prepared to stand back from controversy and look closely at the thought by itself, he will without difficulty discover the absurdity implied in the doctrine.

510. Let us take for granted that, as our opponents put it, unbegottenness is being, and in just the same way begottenness refers to being. If then one follows exactly the meaning of the words, the Manichean doctrine will take shape along this route, if indeed the antithesis of evil to good and light to darkness and all the rest in accordance with contrariety of nature is the doctrine which Manichees adopt. 511. And that | I am telling the truth will readily be allowed by anyone who has not skimmed the argument too rapidly. We may think of it as follows. In every subject some inherent characteristics are always observed, by which the identity of the underlying nature is recognized, whether it is the explanation of the difference between animals that is being discussed or of anything else. A tree and an animal do not have the same characteristics,

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and in the animal kingdom the marks by which humanity is recognized are not shared with irrational nature. Again, the same features do not indicate both life and death. In every single case, as we have said, what distinguishes the subject is somehow unmixed and incommunicable, in no way confused through any sharing of the features attributed to them. 512. Now let our opponents' position be examined along the same lines. They say that unbegottenness is being, and they refer begottenness similarly to being. But just as a man and a stone have different and not the same characteristics, since we should not give the same account in each case of the animate and inanimate in defining what it is, so they will surely allow that the unbegotten is recognized by certain marks, the begotten by others. | Let us therefore consider those things which identify the Unbegotten God, insofar as we have learned from holy Scripture to speak and think religiously of him. 409M

513. What then are these marks? No Christian can, I suppose, be ignorant that he is good, that he is generous, that he is holy, just and sacred, invisible and immortal, not liable to decay, change or alteration, powerful, wise, beneficent, sovereign, judge and so forth. There is no need to | prolong our account by dwelling on accepted things. 514. If then we accept these in the unbegotten nature, and the idea of being begotten is contrary to not being begotten, then those who define unbegottenness and begetting as being, are obliged to concede, in accordance with their account of the antithesis between begotten and unbegotten, that the characteristic marks of begotten being are contrary to those attributed to the unbegotten nature. 515. If they were to say they are the same, the otherness of nature in the subjects will no longer be supported by the identity of attributes. Where things are different, the characteristics must surely be reckoned to be different, and those which are the same in terms of being, will manifestly be identified by the same marks. If then they attest the same for the Onlybegotten, they envisage no difference, as we have said, in the underlying subject. 516. If however they stick to their blasphemous words, and argue the difference of nature constituted by the distinction of Begotten and Unbegotten, it is surely easy to perceive what conclusion follows: once the nature of the things signified by the names is also thought to be contradictory to itself in the same way that the names are opposed, it must follow that the attributes of each differ as opposites, so that the opposite of what is said of the Father applies to the Onlybegotten—godhead, holiness, goodness, incorruptibility, eternity and whatever else represents to us the God over all in our pious meditation; therefore all that is incongruous and opposed to every higher conception is thought to identify begotten being. 175

517. For the sake of clarity we must dwell further on the point. As heat and cold are by | nature opposites—one might take as examples for the argument 176

412M

fire and ice, each of which is what the other is not—and as the physical manifestations of each of these is quite different from the other—it is characteristic of ice to make cool, of fire to warm—so, if corresponding to the opposition in the names between unbegotten and begotten the nature represented by the names is also divided into contrariety, it is not possible for the powers of things by nature opposed to be like each other, as it is not possible for cooling to happen in fire, or burning in ice. 518. If then goodness is attributed to the unbegotten being, and the unbegotten is, as they say, distinct in terms of nature from the begotten, | then surely the characteristic of the unbegotten will also differ from what characterizes the begotten. Consequently, if there is goodness in one, the opposite of goodness is attributed to the other. So with the help of these clever dogmaticians we shall have Manes revived, parading the nature of evil against the good, and teaching by the difference of their being the opposition of their powers.

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519. If one is to speak frankly and without reserve, Manes might plausibly be considered more pardonable than these men, Manes who, it is said, having first boldly embarked on Manichean doctrines, named the heresy after himself. I say this, as if one were deciding which is kinder, the viper or the asp; yet since it is possible to discriminate even between beasts as to which is worse, do not their doctrines when tested show the Manichees to be more tolerable than the others? 520. Manes thought he was commending the Cause of all good things, on the ground that no cause of evil things took its origin from him, and for | this reason he attached the cause of all things reckoned evil to another distinct principle, as if he were defending the God of the universe, since it is not pious to hold the source of good things responsible also for what is done irrationally badly; not perceiving in his narrowness of vision that it was impossible either to think of God as the maker of evil things or to conceive any other Unbegun besides God. 521. There is much to say about this, which does not belong here. The reason we raised the subject was that, whereas Manes thought he ought to separate the principle of evil from the God of the universe, our opponents present something harsher than these doctrines in this grotesque blasphemy against the Son. 522. They resemble the Manichees in accounting for the nature of evil through the opposition of being. But insofar as they further assert that the fabricator of such a creature is the God of the universe, and they say that the begetting produced by him has a being quite different in its nature from its maker, they reach a greater degree of irreligion than those named; not only do they attribute concrete existence (*hypostasis*) to what is by its nature opposed to the good, but because they say that the good God is the cause of another god different in nature, they all but publicly proclaim in their doctrine that there is something contrary to the nature of the Good, which gets its concrete exis-

tence (*hypostasis*) from the Good itself. 523. Since the Father's being is held to be good, while that of the Son, because he is not like the Father in terms of being, is, so the heresy believes, consequently found on the opposite side, what conclusion follows?—that what is opposed to the Good exists, and from | the 178
Good itself what is contradictory in nature got existence. That is, I say, more alarming than the absurdity of the Manichees.

524. They may however formally repudiate the blasphemy which the argument from their doctrine demonstrates, and say that the Onlybegotten has inherited the Father's good things, even though he is not truly Son in the orthodox sense, but | has his existence (*hypostasis*) by creation. So let us examine this 413M
further question, whether it is possible to support such an opinion by rational argument. 525. If their assertion be granted, that while not truly Son he has become heir to the Lord of all, and having been created and made he governs his kindred, how is it that the rest of creation will accept and not rebel at being reduced from kinship to subjection? Being in no way inferior in nature, since it is itself created just as he is, it would then be condemned to servitude and subjugation to what is akin to it. 526. Such a thing resembles tyranny, when power is given not to superiority of being, but with nature remaining equal: the creation is divided into servant and master, so that one part of it rules, while the other is subordinate, this honour having been won by luck, as in a raffle, by the one who was allotted advancement above his equals. 527. Man was not equal to the inferior nature when he was allotted the government of the beasts, but as superior in reason he is lord of the rest, promoted because he differs in superiority of nature. The reason why human governments suffer frequent changes, is that it is not acceptable to one of like worth by nature to be excluded from an equal share with the superior, but there is an instinctive nat-
ural desire in everyone | to become equal to the ruling power, when it is akin. 179
528. And how will it be true that all things were made through him, if it is true that the Son himself is one of the things which have been made? Either he will have made himself, so as not to falsify the text, "All things were made through him,"¹⁸⁷ so making valid against them the paradox which they falsely impute to our doctrine, namely that he was made by himself; or else, if that is absurd and unreasonable, the claim that the whole creation was made by him will be shown to be quite untenable. 529. The single exception proves the saying about "all things" false. As a result of declaring the Onlybegotten to be a creature the argument surely cannot escape one of two evil absurdities: either that he is not the cause of all the things made, if he is himself excepted from "all things," he

187 Jn 1,3.

whom they assert to be one of the works; or else that he is shown to be his own maker, if the one who proclaimed that nothing made was made without him tells no lie.

XXXVI 530–534. A further cursory account of the Church's teaching

530. Such then are their arguments. But if anyone attends to healthy doctrine and believes that the Son is of the divine and pure nature, everything will manifestly harmonize with the orthodox teaching, that the Lord is the maker of all things, that he reigns over what exists, not promoted by arbitrary choice or by
 416M usurped power over his fellows, but by superiority of nature exercising authority over all; 531. and furthermore that the | doctrine of sole rule does not allow
 180 portioning out into various ruling principles which are divided by otherness of nature, but | it believes that there is one Godhead, one Beginning, one Authority over all things, the godhead being perceived in the concord between like beings and leading the mind from like to like. Thus the Beginning of all things, which is the Lord, irradiates souls through the Holy Spirit, for it is impossible for the Lord Jesus to be contemplated except in the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says;¹⁸⁸ and through the Lord, who is the Beginning of all things, the Beginning which transcends all beginning is discovered to us, that is the God over all, for neither is it possible to come to know the ultimate good, except as it appears in the Image of the Invisible.¹⁸⁹ 532. Then at the high point of divine knowledge, I mean the God over all, as if we were at the turn of a race-track, we reverse course, running in our mind through things intimately connected and related, and from the Father through the Son we arrive again at the Spirit. Taking our stand in contemplation of the Unbegotten Light, from there we again instantly perceive in intimate connexion the Light coming from him, like a sun-ray coexisting with the sun, which gets its cause of being from the sun, but has its existence simultaneous, not being added to it later in time, but shining from it as soon as the sun appears. 533. But there is no need to follow the illustration slavishly and give critics of our case a handle by the looseness of the example. It is not so much a ray from a sun which we shall perceive, but from the unbegotten Sun a second Sun shining out together with him as if begotten simultaneously with the very thought of the first, in every respect like him in beauty, power, brilliance, greatness, brightness, and all the attributes of the

¹⁸⁸ 1 Cor 12,4.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Col 1,15.

sun together. Again there is in the same way a third such Light, | sundered by no 181
 interval of time from the begotten Light, but shining through him, which has
 the cause of its existence (*hypostasis*) in the primary Light, yet a Light which
 itself in the same way as the one previously envisaged shines and illuminates
 and performs all the other functions of light. 534. For one Light does not differ
 from another merely because it is another, when he appears in no way lacking
 or defective in illuminating grace; but he is perceived as in all perfection exalted
 to the supreme height with Father and Son, is counted after the Father and the
 Son, and bestows on all those able to participate an access through himself to
 the Light envisaged in the Father and the Son.

**XXXVII 535–548. A defence of remarks of blessed Basil, which Eunomius
 attacks, where Basil says that the titles “Father” and “Unbegotten”
 can have the same meaning**

535. So much for that subject. But Eunomius has plenty of fluency in insults: he
 makes abuse his opening argument, and produces insult in place of demonstra-
 tion of the points at issue; so let us turn to a brief examination of all the abusive
 attacks he made, in accusing our Master about the word “unbegotten”, both per-
 sonally and on his book. 536. He produced a passage on this subject from the 417M
 Master which reads as follows: “I myself | would say that the title ‘Unbegotten’,
 though it certainly seems to agree with our ideas, nevertheless, since it stands
 nowhere in Scripture and is a first principle of his blasphemy, rightly ought
 to be left unuttered, since the word ‘Father’ means the same as ‘Unbegotten’.
 He who is truly and only Father is from no other, and what is from no other
 is the same as the unbegotten.”¹⁹⁰ 537. Now | let us hear what he produces in 182
 his writing to show that this argument is wrong: “The irregularities of wording,
 which from haste as much as unashamed malice he mixes into his own efforts,
 as he is swept about by instability of mind and disease of his rational powers ...”
 Observe the accurate aim of the reply, how skilfully he uses that logical training
 of his to analyse the meaning of the words and to substitute a more orthodox
 understanding. 538. Irregular, he says, in wording, hasty as much as malicious,
 in mind unstable, swept about by the disease of his rational powers. How does
 one who is stable in mind and healthy in his rational powers come to say these
 things? What causes him this provocation? Which of the statements does he
 most object to? Is it that Basil accepts the idea of “Unbegotten,” but says that

190 Basil, *CE* 15 (SC 299, 174–176), incompletely quoted.

the word ought to be left unspoken because it has been wrongly understood by its perverters? 539. What? Is the safety of the faith at risk in words and expression, while nothing is said about the precise meaning? Does not the Word of truth urge us first and foremost to purify our heart from evil thoughts, and in order to indicate the soul's stirrings to use words by which it might be possible to bring to light the secrets of the mind, with no minute concern over such outward verbal expression? 540. Saying this or that does not constitute the cause of the thought we have, but the hidden thinking of the heart provides the cause of such words: "From the superfluity of the | heart," he says, "the mouth speaks."¹⁹¹ 183 We make speech our interpreter of what we think, not the reverse: we do not compile the mind from the things we say. If the two are present together, an able mind and interpretation, the person is accomplished in both respects; if one is missing, the loss to the one unskilled in words is small, provided the knowledge in the soul is trained for goodness. 541. "This people," he says, "honours me with the lips, but their heart is far away from me."¹⁹² He means by this, that God the Judge, who perceives the unspoken groanings,¹⁹³ regards more highly the disposition of the soul towards the truth than propriety of articulate speech. 542. Words can be used also with contrary intent, the tongue readily serving any purpose in accordance with the competence of the speaker. But the soul's disposition, exactly as it is, is seen by the one who looks into the secret parts.

543. Why then is he "irregular, and hasty as much as malicious," when he both confesses and accepts the orthodox meaning of the word "Unbegotten", but inasmuch as it contributes to impiety among those who commit doctrinal 420M crimes, says it ought not to be used? 544. If | he were saying that God should not be considered unbegotten, there might perhaps be ground for employing these insults against him, and worse besides. If however he confesses it in accordance with the general understanding of the orthodox, but gives advice in appropriate didactic manner, "Avoid this term, in which the disastrous system takes its starting-point;" and if he bids us accept the idea that God is unbegotten through 184 the use of other names too, then for | that he deserves none of those insults. 545. Have we not learned from the Truth himself that we should do this, and not cling even to very precious things, if any of them leads to evil? When he bids us amputate a right eye or foot or similarly the hand, when any of them causes offence,¹⁹⁴ there is only one thing he instructs us to do by this parable:

¹⁹¹ *Mt* 12,34.

¹⁹² *Mt* 15,8; *Is* 29,13.

¹⁹³ Cf. *Rom* 8,26.

¹⁹⁴ *Mt* 5,20.

things which seem to be good, if they lead a person to something bad through un wisdom in the users, he deprives of operation and effect, on the ground that it is better to be saved with the things which lead to sin chopped off, than by clinging to them to perish through them. 546. And what of Paul the imitator of Christ? He also in his profound wisdom teaches the same. He who calls all things good, and nothing unacceptable if it is taken with thanksgiving,¹⁹⁵ does sometimes for the sake of the conscience of the weaker person reject again some of the things he has accepted, and bids us refuse them. "If for the sake of food," he says, "my brother is hurt, I will never eat meat again."¹⁹⁶ 547. This then is also what the imitator of Paul does. When he saw that the evil practice of heresy through the term "Unbegotten" was adding strength to the deceit of those who were sustaining the doctrine of Unlikeness through this word, he advised us to conserve the orthodox thought of "Unbegotten" in the soul, but not to be too keen on the actual word, since it had become a means to sin for the lost; the title "Father" in terms of meaning would sufficiently imprint upon us the sense of "Unbegotten." 548. When we hear "Father", we at once think of the universal cause of being; if he had another superior cause, he would not properly be called "Father," since | properly the title "Father" would revert to the supposed prior cause. But if he is himself the cause of all and all things are from him, as the Apostle says,¹⁹⁷ then plainly nothing can be conceived as prior to his existence; and that means to be believed to exist unbegotten. 185

XXXVIII 549–616. A critique of the over-ingenious syllogisms used by Eunomius for various purposes¹⁹⁸

549. Yet he cannot agree that these things are right, since he declines to think that even the Truth is more credible than himself, but subjects the book to opposition, contradiction and scorn. Or would you like me to examine the conclusive syllogisms, the subtle philosophical twists, by which he proposes to refute the book? 550. I am afraid however that the meanness | and shabbiness of the writing will somehow bring even the words which censure it into contempt. To grapple with small boys in a fight because they offer the challenge 421M

¹⁹⁵ 1Tim 4,4.

¹⁹⁶ 1Cor 8,13.

¹⁹⁷ 1Cor 8,6.

¹⁹⁸ The heading stands here in Winling. The MSS mark it lower at § 552.

would bring grown men greater censure for competing with such opponents than the praise for seeming to win. Yet it is that sort of statement. Things uttered as jibes with that customary euphony we consign to silence and oblivion: they suit his way of speaking and challenge us to exercise patience. For I think it indecent to scatter his ridiculous statements in our serious studies, and so dissolve our effort for the truth in unseemly and vulgar taunts. 551. It is not possible to endure listening to these things without laughing, when we hear him saying with that sublime and grand oratory, "One whose added words produce added blasphemy, finds that silence relieves half the weight of speaking."¹⁹⁹ Let
 186 that be mocked by those who know what | is acceptable and what is absurd. I shall investigate the acuteness of the syllogisms which he uses to ridicule our case.

552. "If 'Father,'" he says, "and 'Unbegotten' have the same meaning, and if names with the same meaning surely also mean the same thing, and 'Unbegotten' on their own showing means to be God from no other, it necessarily follows that 'Father' also means to be God from no other, and not that he has begotten the Son." By what necessity, pray, does the word "Father" no longer mean that he has begotten the Son, if the same title implicitly also states for us that the Father has no superior? 553. If the one negated the other, as naturally happens with contraries, the statement of one would necessarily entail the negation of the other. But since there is nothing to prevent the same one being both Father and Unbegotten, if in one sense we also understand "Unbegotten" by the title "Father", by what necessity is the relation to the Son no longer indicated by the word "Father"? 554. Not all other names which have some meaning in common with each other also coincide in every connotation: we call the Emperor both Sovereign and Absolute, and also Ruler of his subjects, and it is not false to say of him that the word "Emperor" also means "Absolute"; nor do we say that it is logically necessary, if sovereignty and absence of a superior are indicated by this word, that his authority over his subjects is no longer signified by his being Emperor. Lying between the two concepts, the title of Emperor sometimes indicates Absolute, sometimes government
 187 of subordinates. 555. | In this case therefore, if there is any other supposed father prior to the Father of the Lord, let those who boast of secret wisdom show us, and then we shall agree that the idea of Unbegotten cannot be stated by the title "Father". 556. But if the first Father has no cause superior to his
 424M own subsistence, | and with the Father the existence (*hypostasis*) of the Only-begotten is surely also implied, why should they scare us when they try to

199 This is part of a passage more fully quoted in § 562.

convince us, or rather trick us into believing, with their artful philosophical twists, that if the unbegottenness of the God over all is confessed in the title “Father”, we must wrench the meaning of “Father” away from his relation to the Son.

557. Having spat upon this childish and superficial effort of theirs, we may acknowledge in adult fashion what is described as absurd by them, both that the name of “Father” means the same as “Unbegotten”, and that “Unbegotten” implies that the Father is from no other, and also that “the Father” introduces by relationship to himself in combination the idea of the Onlybegotten. This fierce and invincible battler stole from the text this point, which had been included in the statement of our teacher; by eliminating things cautiously stated he made contradiction easy for himself. 558. The statement made by our teacher runs word for word as follows: “I myself would say that the title ‘Unbegotten’, though it certainly seems to agree with our ideas, nevertheless, since it stands nowhere in Scripture, and is a first principle of their blasphemy, rightly ought to be left unuttered, since the word ‘Father’ means the same as ‘Unbegotten’, so as | to introduce by relationship in combination with itself the idea of the Son.” 559. Our worthy champion of truth took his customary liberty and quietly removed what had been added to the statement for cautious accuracy, I mean the words, “So as to introduce by relationship in combination with itself the idea of the Son;” then having robbed the text of the clause he tackles the rest, and after maiming the bodily frame and, as he thought, getting it into a fractured condition ready for his easy contradiction, he cheats his own supporters with the tepid and feeble trick, arguing that what has one thing in common also shares the common meaning in every respect, and thereby he grabs his shallow audience. 560. Whereas we have said that the word “Father” in a sense imports also the meaning of “Unbegotten”, Eunomius makes his complete change of sense from the ordinary meaning of the terms, and finally brings the argument to the absurdity of saying that this title no longer indicates the relation to the Son, if the concept of “Unbegotten” is thereby signified. 561. It is as if someone who had been told two ideas about bread, that it is made of flour and that it is food to its user, were to argue with the speaker and use the same sort of trick arguments as his, that being made of flour is one account and being food is quite another. If therefore it is given that bread is from flour, it can no longer correctly be said that the same thing is also food. This is the logic of the syllogism: 562. “If ‘Unbegotten’ is signified by the title ‘Father,’” he says, | “this word does not also imply that he has begotten the Son.” | But perhaps we ought to apply to the statement that noble sentence in the paragraph: “Such things surely suit such people, because he would have presented more appearance of good sense, if he had decided on this circumspection by complete silence. One whose added

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425M

words produce added blasphemy, or rather absolute madness, finds that silence relieves not half the weight of speaking, but the whole.”²⁰⁰

190 563. Perhaps one might draw him to the truth of what is being said by things affecting himself. We might well leave now the complexification of logical entanglements and make our direct challenge on the subject in more unsophisticated and commonplace terms. Your father, Eunomius, was certainly a man, but this same individual was also the cause of your existence. 564. Did you ever use this clever argument in his case, so that “your father,” if the definition of his nature were applied to him, because he was a man, could no longer signify his relation to you? He must presumably be one thing or the other, either a man or Eunomius’ father. Then you are not at liberty to use familiar words without their familiar signification; 565. yet although you would accuse of slander anyone who made ribald jokes about you by manipulating words, yet do you not
shudder to mock God and | laugh without misgivings as you poke fun at the doctrines of the mysteries? 566. In your case “father” indicates the close relation to you, and at the same time he is not prevented by that from being a man, and no one in his senses, instead of calling the one who begot you your father, would give him the designation “man”; nor again, because on being asked about his species he had admitted to being a man, would he say that he was prevented by that admission from being also your father. 567. In the same way also with the God of the universe: true religion will not deny that the title “Father” means that he exists unbegotten, and that in another sense the close relation to the Son is also indicated. The mocker of truth however no longer says that the title “Father” means that the Father begot the Son, if we also understand by the same word that he is unbegotten.

191; 428M 568. There is a further point to add to prove the absurdity of the proposition, and one which I would say that no one, not even quite a small child just learning verbal skills under a teacher of grammar and tutor would fail to know. Every one knows that some nouns are absolute and unrelated, others are used to express a relation. 569. Of these, too, there are some which are tilted one way or the other according to the intention of the speaker, which used by themselves express the simple meaning, but often change to become relational. So as not to prolong the discussion by using examples far away from the matter in hand, my meaning will be explained from the doctrines themselves. 570. God | is called by holy Scripture both “Father” and “King”, and a thousand other names. Of these names some can be said absolutely, just simply stated by themselves: such are “imperishable”, “eternal”, “immortal” and the like. These names, though there is

200 Gregory quotes more fully the words cited in § 551, returning the insult against Eunomius.

no other underlying implication, describe by themselves some complete idea about God. 571. Other names refer only to some beneficial relationship, like “help”, “shield”, “succour”, and those with similar meanings; if you remove the need for help, the significant force of the name is lost. But there are some, as we said before, which are used both independently and with their relatedness, such as “God” and “good” and others like them; with these the concept is not entirely confined to the absolute use. 572. The universal God often becomes personal to the one who calls upon him, in the way we may hear the holy ones making the Supreme Nature personal to them. “Holy is the Lord God”²⁰¹ is, as far as it goes, unrelated. But if someone adds “our”,²⁰² he no longer allows the name to be understood by itself; he has made the meaning personal in relating it to himself. Again, the Spirit cries, “Abba, Father!”²⁰³ Here the word is independent of the particular relationship. 573. But we are also commanded to call the Father in heaven “our Father”;²⁰⁴ this again is the relational meaning. So just as the person who makes the universal God his own in no way obscures his position as supreme over all, so there is no reason why the Father, having appointed the one originating from himself as the Firstborn of all creation, should not both | indicate by the title “Father” that he has begotten the Son, and by the same word explain that he exists from no superior cause. 574. He who speaks of the first Father indicates one conceived as prior to the universe, beyond whom there is none.²⁰⁵ ... He has nothing that he perceives before himself, and no limit beyond him where he ceases; being always everywhere the same, and transcending every final limit and idea of beginning, he has implicit in every title the further notion of eternity.

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575. But our Eunomius, the frequent contemplator of incomprehensible things, does not accept this commonplace. He does not allow that there is a double meaning of “Father”, one by which it means that all things are from him, and first of all the Onlybegotten Son, through whom are all things,²⁰⁶ and another by which it means that he has no superior cause. 576. But even if he despises the argument, we ourselves shall set at nought his ribald jokes and

201 *Rev* 4,8.

202 *Rev* 4,11.

203 *Rom* 8,15.

204 *Mt* 6,9.

205 Jaeger detects corruption in the texts in this sentence, with a short lacuna. The words could be understood somewhat differently without Jaeger's correction: “He who refers to the First (Being) as Father, indicates one conceived as prior to the universe, of which he is himself the Transcendent, having nothing that he perceives as before himself ...”

206 *1 Cor* 8,6.

cheerfully make the answer we have now given, that “Father” is the same as “Unbegotten”, that it means that he has begotten the Son, and that it states his existence from no other.

429M 577. He again attacks our words and says—though the argument turns right
back in the opposite direction: “If it is because God | is Father that he has
begotten the Son, and ‘Father’ has the same meaning as ‘Unbegotten’, then it is
because he has begotten the Son that God is unbegotten, and before he begot
193 | him, he was not unbegotten.” Let us therefore observe also his argument by
inversion, and the way he reverses his previous trick by dismantling it, and
using it to shut us in with inescapable necessity. 578. The first syllogism used
this alleged absurdity: if “Father” means that God is from no other, it will of
necessity no longer indicate that he has begotten the Son. Now, by turning it the
other way round he promises us another absurdity against our doctrine. How
then does he dismantle his previous demonstration? He says, “If it is because
God is Father that he has begotten the Son.” 579. That is not what the former
syllogism presented us with. The logic of the syllogism then showed that, if
“Unbegotten” were the meaning of “Father”, then it could supposedly not also
signify the relation to the Son: but that God is Father because he has begotten
the Son, was not determined by the first argument either. What this turnabout
by his shrewd dialectical skill means, I fail to understand.

580. Let us examine however what his words mean: “If it is because he has
begotten the Son that God is Father, then before he begot him he was not unbe-
gotten.” Again the response of truth to the proposition is ready to hand and
simple: the designation “Father” indicates both that he has begotten the Son, as
has already been demonstrated in our discussion, and that the one who begot
is reckoned to be without an originating cause. 581. If you have an eye to what
is from him, the existence (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten is made known
through the title “Father”; if you enquire about what there is before him, the
designation “Father” indicates that the one who has begotten the Son is with-
194 out beginning. To say that before he begot the Son | God was not unbegotten,
exposes the writer to two charges, of misrepresenting us, and of assaulting true
doctrine: he disparages as our accepted principle what was said neither by the
Master nor by us, and he says that God has at a later stage become Father, appar-
ently being something else before that and not Father. 582. The very words
he uses to ridicule our statement as absurd proclaim his own doctrinal crime.
In taking it for granted that, being something else before, by progression he
became and was named “Father”, he is saying this: Before he begot the Son and
was therefore called “Father”, he was not Unbegotten either, if being Unbegot-
ten is implied by the idea of “Father.” 583. The idiocy of this needs, I should
think, no proof. It provides enough proof for itself, to any intelligent person.

If God was something else before he became Father, what are the champions of the doctrine to say? In what state will they claim to envisage him? What term will describe that stage? Child? Infant? Baby? Boy? Or will they say none of these, perhaps blushing at the obvious absurdity, and will allow that he is complete from the beginning? But then how is he complete when he cannot yet be Father? Or will they allow that he has the ability, but say that it is not | fitting for him simultaneously to exist and to be Father? 584. And if it is not 432M good and fitting for him to be from the beginning the Father of such a Son, how did he proceed to acquire what was not good? But it is in fact good, and in keeping with the majesty of God, that he became the Father of such a Son. They will therefore | argue that he was originally deprived of good, and as long 195 as God did not have the Son, they will say (God forgive the expression!) that he has neither wisdom nor power nor truth nor life nor any of those things by which in his various aspects the Onlybegotten Son has both his being and his titles.

585. Let these things fall on the head of those who originated them. We must return to where we started: "If," he says, "it is because God is Father that he has begotten, and 'Father' means 'Unbegotten', before he begot him, he was not unbegotten." If he were to say this in accordance with human experience, where it is impracticable for anyone to acquire the practice of a number of functions at the same time, but he must take up each of his interests in order and one at a time, 586.—if we were obliged to think like that about the God of the universe, so that at one time he has unbegottenness, after that acquires power, then imperishability, then wisdom, then going on he becomes Father, subsequently just, and thereafter eternal, and in due course he then obtains whatever else is attributed to him, it would not perhaps be particularly absurd to think that the names for God come one after the other, and to say that he was at first Unbegotten, and afterwards became Father. 587. But as it is, can any be so intellectually weak and unversed in the nobility of divine doctrines, that when considering the Cause of what exists, he does not adopt an understanding of all that piety attributes to God as together simultaneous and combined, but | thinks that one was acquired later, another at the start, another 196 in between in some orderly sequence? 588. As one's mind dwells upon any one of the things which piety says about God, it is not possible to find any other thing or concept which will be able to exceed the antiquity of the one under consideration; every divine name, every sublime conception, every utterance or idea which is in keeping with what we think about God, depends on the next and is at one with it, and all conceptions of God are understood as simultaneously connected and combined with each other, fatherhood, unbegottenness, power, imperishability, goodness, authority, and all the rest. 589.

Each of these is not thought of apart, separated from the rest by itself in a particular period of time, preceding or following another, but every magnificent and religious title that can be conceived shares in the meaning of God's eternity. 590. So just as one may not say that God is not good or powerful or imperishable or immortal, in the same way it is wicked not to attribute fatherhood to him always, but | to say that it was added later. 591. The one truly Father is always Father. If the "always" were not attached to the confession, but some idea of priority vainly conceived were to curtail and mutilate beforehand the idea of "Father", then he would not be correctly confessed as being truly Father, since that idea which conceives him as prior to the Son would limit the eternal continuity of his fatherhood. 592. If therefore he was first Unbegotten and thereafter became and was called Father, then surely he has not always been what he is now called. But in fact what God is now, he always is, not becoming better or worse by any addition, nor taking over something from something else and changing, but is | always the same as himself. If he was not Father from the beginning, he did not become Father afterwards; for how can what he is now called be thought of as something he became later? 593. But if it is allowed that he is Father, I shall again repeat the same argument: What he now is, he has also always been; and if he always has been, he will also always be. Therefore the Father is always Father. But with the Father the Son is also implied at the same time, since it is not possible for the Father's title to be affirmed without a Son to substantiate the designation. Consequently everything predicated of the Father is envisaged also in the Son. 594. All that the Father possesses is the Son's, and all that belongs to the Son the Father possesses.²⁰⁷ The Father, I say, possesses what belongs to the Son, so that the malicious critic may not insolently include in "all" the idea that the Son has not been begotten, when it is said that the Son possesses all that belongs to the Father, or conversely that the Father is also begotten, when all that belongs to the Son is perceived in the Father. For the Son possesses all that is the Father's, but is not Father; and conversely all that belongs to the Son is attributed to the Father, but he is not Son.

595. If then all that is the Father's belongs to the Onlybegotten, and he is in the Father, and fatherhood is not separated from unbegottenness, what can be conceived of the Father apart by himself in some period before the Son is thought of? I certainly do not see. 596. We may therefore with fearless courage come to grips with the sophistic arguments deployed against us, and without quailing at the bogey thought up to terrify children we may say that God

²⁰⁷ *Jn* 16,15.

| is holy, immortal, Father, unbegotten, eternal and all of them at once; and if one grants hypothetically that any of the things piously ascribed to him is not there, all disappear with the one. It is impossible, if he is not immortal, for the rest to be there, but what is said of one particular must apply generally. 597. Nothing about him therefore is either previous or new; otherwise he would have to be older and younger than himself. If God is not everlastingly all things, but in some order and sequence he is one thing and becomes another, and there is no compounding where he is concerned, but whatever he is, he is entirely, and if as the heresy teaches he is first Unbegotten and then becomes Father, | since the amassing of qualities is not conceivable in his case, he can only become in his entirety both senior and junior to his entire self, as Unbegotten being prior to himself, and in terms of the concept of "Father" becoming subsequent to himself. 598. But if as the prophet says of God he is The Same,²⁰⁸ then to say that before he begot he was not unbegotten is vacuous, for neither of these names is found without the other, neither "Father" nor "Unbegotten", but the two concepts occur together alongside each other in the minds of religious thinkers. God is from eternity Father and to eternity Father, and every name piously ascribed is given simultaneously, this temporal sequence and order having, as we have said, no relevance to the preeternal nature. 436M

599. Let us turn to the rest of Eunomius' versatile dialectic, which he himself says is "at once laughable and pitiable,"²⁰⁹ and rightly so. There is certainly plenty to laugh at in what he says, or rather much cause for grief at the | deceit which grips his soul. Since in one sense "Father" also includes the meaning "Unbegotten," as we argue, he substitutes "Unbegotten" alone for the correct designation of the Father, using these words: 600. "If it means the same to say 'Unbegotten' and 'Father', it will be open to us to abandon the term 'Father', and to substitute 'Unbegotten' and say, 'The Unbegotten is the Son's Unbegotten.' For just as the Unbegotten is the Son's Father, so conversely the Father is the Son's Unbegotten." I am quite struck with admiration for the gentleman's ingenuity, and with the thought that the versatility and variety of his games with doctrine are beyond the powers of most of us. 601. One short statement contains the whole gist of what our Master said: It is possible that unbegottenness can be expressed in the title "Father". But Eunomius has so many other words besides, of which the majority consist not of different ideas, but of going round and back over the same words. Just like those who with blindfolded eyes go 199

208 Cf. *Ps* 101,28/102,27 etc.

209 It is uncertain how many words are quoted (Jaeger).

round and round the mill, and for all their travelling stay in the same place, so he always turns around the same points, and does not leave them. 602. He says once in scorn that “Father” does not mean to have begotten, but to be from no other.²¹⁰ Again he weaves the similar pattern: “If ‘Unbegotten’ means ‘Father,’ before he begot he was not unbegotten.”²¹¹ Then a third time he comes back to the same points: “It will be open to us to substitute ‘Unbegotten’ and say, ‘The Unbegotten is the Son’s Unbegotten.’”²¹² Then he straight away takes up what
 200 he has often rejected, and says: | “Just as the Unbegotten is the Son’s Father, so conversely the Father is the Son’s Unbegotten.” 603. How often he has run back to his own vomit, how often consumed it again,²¹³ how often spued it out! Will not most people find us also burdensome if we drag out our own study to match the vacuity of what he has put before us?

Perhaps it would be more fitting to keep quiet about such matters. But so that no one may think that the case is failing for weakness of argument, I will make the following answer to what he says. 604. You are not at liberty to call the Father the Son’s Unbegotten, even if the title “Father” does indicate that the one who begot him has no prior cause. Just as in the example given, on hearing the office of Emperor mentioned, we understood two things from the word, that the supreme authority is subject to no other, and that he rules over his subjects, so the title of “Father” expresses a double meaning in the case of God, his relation to the Son, and that he depends on no conceivable prior cause. 605. It is not possible to say of the Emperor, that if two things are meant by the same title, that he rules his subjects and that he has no superior, it is open to us to refer to him not as ruling his people, but as “Emperorless of his subjects,” nor may we compose this kind of statement, “Just as he is called his people’s Emperor, so he may also be called his people’s Emperorless.” In exactly the same way, when the word “Father” both indicates the Son and expresses the concept of unbegottenness, it is not open to us to exchange the terminology unnecessarily and attach the idea of the Unbegotten ridiculously to the relationship to the Son, by saying that the Unbegotten is the Son’s Unbegotten.

201 606. | Having arrived at the truth by such statements and refuted the absurdity of his opponents, Eunomius utters a kind of boast: “What man of sense,” he says, “would think it right to silence the natural meaning and prize the nonsensical?” No one, my clever friend; and certainly not our book, which says that

²¹⁰ See §577.

²¹¹ See §580.

²¹² See §600.

²¹³ This ugly metaphor is proverbial and scriptural: *Pr* 26,11 quoted in *2 Pe* 2,22.

the title “Unbegotten” agrees with our ideas, and that it should be kept intact in our hearts, but instead of the term which you have perverted the title “Father” is enough, and leads to the same concept. 607. Recall the words you yourself used. Basil “did not think it right to silence the natural meaning, and prize” what you call “the nonsensical.” He counselled rather that one might safely suppress the mere title “Unbegotten”, that is the audible expression, because it was erroneously understood and was also not used in Scripture, but that what it signifies, he says, very much agrees with our ideas.

608. Such then is our position. But the assailant of sophists, who arms his argument with truth and exposes our errors, does not blush to embellish his doctrinal works with clever sophistic tricks, and to imitate those who raise a laugh at parties with witty jokes. Observe the gravity of the reasoning in his complicated syllogism; I recall again the same words: “If it means the same to say ‘Unbegotten’ and ‘Father’, it will be open to us | to abandon the term ‘Father’, and to substitute ‘Unbegotten’ and say, ‘The Unbegotten is the Son’s Unbegotten.’ For just as the Unbegotten is the Son’s Father, so conversely the Father is the Son’s Unbegotten. | The one is equivalent to the other.”²¹⁴ 609. As though in the case of Adam, supposing one were to argue correctly and soundly, and say that it makes no difference whether one says that he was formed by God as father of all men or as first of men, since they both mean the same thing, and then supposing one of Eunomius’ dialecticians were to fall upon the words and imitate this sort of syllogism, to the effect that, if it is the same thing to say that he was formed by God first, or that he was father of those who came after, it will be open to us to abandon the word “father” and to substitute “first-formed”, thus: “Adam is not Abel’s father, but his first-formed; for as the first-formed is the son’s father, so conversely the father is the son’s first-formed.” 610. If that were said in a public house, what sort of applause and laughter do you think would break out among the drunkards, roaring with laughter at the witty ploy? Such are the words with which our clever theologian fortifies his case and assails our doctrine, when he really needs a tutor and a stick to teach him that not everything that is predicated of a thing refers to just one meaning, as appears from the example we have given of Adam and Abel. 611. Of Adam it is true to say that the same is both father of Abel and work of God. It does not follow, because he is both, that both apply to Abel. So also in the case of the God of the universe, the title “Father” both expresses what is particularly signified by such a word, namely that he has begotten the Son, and it also indicates that no cause is conceived prior to | the one who is truly Father. It does not necessarily follow

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²¹⁴ Extending the quotation given at § 600.

however that, when we speak of the Son, we do not say “the Son’s Father,” but call him “the Son’s Unbegotten;” nor conversely, if the absence of prior beginning says nothing about the relation to the Son, that we discard from our mind the thought that God is unbegotten. But he rejects such use of words, and in the manner of pantomime actors makes fun of the argument, making doctrine the subject of comedy by his weird verbal tricks.

612. Once again I will recall his words: “If it means the same to say ‘Unbegotten’ and ‘Father’, it will be open to us to abandon the term ‘Father’, and to substitute ‘Unbegotten’ and say, ‘The Unbegotten is the Son’s Unbegotten.’ For just as the Unbegotten is the Son’s Father, so conversely the Father is the Son’s Unbegotten.” Now it may be our turn, if you like, to laugh back, turning the logical trick round against him. 613. If “Father” is not the same as “Unbegotten”, the Father’s Son will not be the same as the Unbegotten’s Son. Having that relationship to the Father alone, he will be in a different relation to one who is something else and does not coincide with the idea of “Father.” 614. If therefore the Father is not the same as the Unbegotten, and the title “Father” does not include the meaning “Unbegotten”, the Son being single cannot be divided so as to be related to two things, and the same be Son both of the Father and of the Unbegotten. Just as it was deemed absurd to call God “the Son’s Unbegotten,”
 441M so surely also conversely it will appear equally absurd to | call the Onlybegotten
 204 as the Unbegotten, so that the | Son of the Father is also Son of the Unbegotten, and to ridicule our teaching is pointless, or else, if the Father is something other than the Unbegotten, the Father’s Son is deprived of his relation to the Unbegotten. 615. If the conclusion holds, that the Onlybegotten is not from the Unbegotten, the sequence of argument will also surely show that the Father is begotten by him; what exists, but does not exist unbegotten, must surely have a begotten existence (*hypostasis*). If then the Father is on their showing begotten, being something other than the Unbegotten, what has become of their vaunted Unbegottenness? Where is the foundation and basis of the heretical tower-building? 616. “Unbegotten” has gone, disappeared; through their cheap sophistical tricks it has slipped from the grasp of those who hitherto seemed to have a hold on it, and the argument for unlikeness, vanishing like a dream, has fled from the touch of logic, flying away with “Unbegotten.” So it is that when a lie is preferred to the truth, though for a little it flourishes through deceit, it soon collapses about itself, demolished by its own arguments.

XXXIX 617–651. A reply to the question posed by Eunomius, “Is he who is, begotten?”²¹⁵

617. These things are put forward on our part however, only so far one may be amused by the humour of getting one’s own back on “Unlike.” 618. It is time to get back again to the course of the argument. Eunomius does not wish the meaning of “Unbegotten” to be expressed also by the word “Father”, so that he may deduce that the Onlybegotten once was not. Certainly this question is often put by his disciples, “How is he who is, begotten?” 619. The reason for this is, I believe, that he is unwilling to get away from the human use of words even for divine thoughts. But it is for us with good will towards him to direct what is mistaken in his conception towards what is right, by saying what we know about this subject. 620. | Names, Eunomius, have meaning among us, 205
and yield another meaning when applied to the transcendent Power. Certainly in all other respects the divine nature is separated from the human by a wide margin, and experience reveals nothing here resembling the greatness which is attributed to the transcendent by the guesses of speculation and conjecture. In the same way where the meanings of words are concerned, even if there is some common use of terms between the human and the eternal, yet proportionately to the separation of natures the meanings of terms are also distinct. 621. Thus in his parable the Lord calls God a “man who is a householder;”²¹⁶ that is a term often met in ordinary life. Is the idea of a man among us therefore the same as that man, and our sort of house like that great edifice, as the Apostle says,²¹⁷ in which are counted furnishings of gold and silver and various things of other material? Or are those, which one could not easily know, one thing, being conceived as imperishable and blessed, while those around us, which are from earth and dissolve to earth, are quite another? 622. Similarly in almost everything else the same terminology is used for our affairs as for the divine, 444M
but | indicating along with the identity of terms that the difference of meaning is great. That is why the words for bodily parts and sense-organs can be found applied in just the same way to the divine life as they are to us, though all men hold that life to be beyond sense-experience. Fingers, arm and hand, eye and eyelids, ear, heart, feet, sandals, horses, riding, chariots, and a thousand similar things are carried over by Scripture from human life as parables to clarify the divine. 623. Accordingly, just as each | of these terms is both humanly spo- 206

215 Winling places this heading one sentence later, at § 618. He is right to reject the only place marked in the MSS § 639.

216 *Mt* 13,27.52.

217 *2Tim* 2,20.

ken and is not humanly meant, so also with the term “Father”, though it is used in just the same way of our nature and of the divine, still the meanings of the words differ in proportion to the differences between the subjects to which the terms apply.

624. We think of human generation in one way, and speculate about divine begetting in quite another. Man is born in time, and place entirely contains his life, and without these he cannot sustain existence. 625. For this reason, periods of time always surround a man’s life, I mean the one before him, the one contemporary with him, and the one after. It is true to say of anything that has come into existence that, though it once was not, it now is, and again it will also in future cease to be. But with the preeternal begetting these periods of time, because they have nothing to do with that nature, are for sane thinkers irrelevant. “Once” and “after” and “before”, and the other terms which refer to this temporal extension, are left behind by the one who considers the divine life; he studies sublime things sublimely, and he will not think that the absolute nature is also bound by the things which refer to human generation. 626. Here, passion precedes the constitution of a human being, and certain material conditions are the basis for the formation of the living organism; underlying it in accordance with the divine will is Nature, which works such miracles, from every side gathering what is proper and suitable for the perfection of what is being made, as much as is needed from each of the cosmic elements, and | enough help from time, and such nourishment from those which form the one to be born as is necessary for its formation,—Nature in short, taking all those steps by which human life is constituted, thus brings to birth what is not. The reason why we speak of the coming to be of what is not, is that what at one time is not, at another time begins to be. 627. With the divine begetting however the mind does not admit the ministrations of Nature, the contribution of time to the perfection of the one coming to be, and all those things which our study observed in the case of earthly birth; the one who aspires without fleshly preconceptions to the divine mysteries will not fall in with any such lowly ideas, but will look for some concept | matching the grandeur of what is signified. 628. He will not attribute passion to the impassible; he will not reckon that the creator of all nature needs the help of Nature; he will not allow extent of time to affect eternal existence. Having conceived the divine begetting as free from any of these, he will agree that the term “Father” means only that the Onlybegotten does not exist without a prior principle, so that he has in that the cause of his being, but a beginning of his existence (*hypostasis*) is not envisaged, because nothing to mark the point in question can be conceived. 629. “Older” and “younger” and all such ideas apply to intervals of time; if you remove time from the reckoning, all such marks have been removed and stolen away simultaneously with time itself.

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630. Since then “once” is not admissible for the one who by an inexpressible principle exists with the Father before the ages, he is begotten, but does not “once” begin his being. | He has his existence neither in time nor in space. 208
 With the removal of space and time and every such concept from the person (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten, only the Father is conceived as before him, but the Onlybegotten is also in him, as he himself says;²¹⁸ his nature precludes the concept that he “once” was not. 631. If the Father also once was not, it must follow from the non-existence of the Father that the Son’s eternity is also cut off at the start. But if the Father always is, how does the Son once not exist, when he cannot be thought of by himself and without the Father, but is always silently implied in the title of the Father? 632. The name “Father” includes in itself the predication of the two persons equally, since the idea of the Son comes in automatically with this word. When did the Son not exist? In what can his non-existence be apprehended? In a place?—but there was no place. In time?—the Lord is before times. If then he is before times, when was he not? And if he was in the Father, in what was he not?—it is for you to say, you who see the invisible. 633. What has your imagination invented in between? What novel thing or concept have you thought up, which stretched alongside the Father reveals his life as longer than that of the Onlybegotten?

634. Why do I say this? Even with men it is not, strictly speaking, possible to say that any was not when he was begotten. Many generations before his physical birth Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek; the Apostle says that Levi who receives tithes, paid tithes, and cited as proof of his statement the fact that | 209
 he was in the loins of his father, when Abraham met the priest of the Most High.²¹⁹ 635. So in a way a man exists when he is begotten, and according to the apostolic testimony preexists through community of being in his parent; how then in the case of the divine nature do they dare propose this expression, “When he was not, he was begotten,” of him who is in the Father?—as the Lord says, “I am in the Father and the Father in me.”²²⁰ 636. | Each is said, of 448M
 course, to be in the other from a different point of view: the Son in the Father, as the beauty of the copy is in the original shape, and the Father in the Son, as the beauty of the prototype is in the copy. In the case of hand-wrought representations the intervening time must surely separate the transferred shape from its prototype; but yonder it is impossible to part one from the other (as the Apostle says),²²¹ nor the impress from the reality (*hypostasis*), nor the efflu-

²¹⁸ *Jn* 1,18 etc.

²¹⁹ *Heb* 7,5–10.

²²⁰ *Jn* 10,38.

²²¹ *Heb* 1,3.

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gence from the divine glory, nor the image from the goodness, but the thought of any one of these brings into the mind with it the corresponding thought. 637. "Being," he says, "the effulgence of his glory;" "being", not "having become", so that both kinds of irreligious interpretation might thereby be excluded. Neither may one think that the Onlybegotten is unbegotten, because he says, "the effulgence of his glory," for effulgence derives from glory, and not the other way around, the glory from the effulgence; nor may one think that he once began to be, for the evidence of "being" makes clear the perpetuity and eternity of the Son and his transcendence of all temporal terminology. 638. What room is there then for this demeaning question to be posed to the hurt of religion by our opponents, a question which | they propound as unanswerable by us in making the case for their own teaching, when they ask, "Is he who is, begotten?" 639. To them we may confidently reply, that being in the Unbegotten he was begotten from him, having thence the cause of his being—he says, "I live because of the Father"²²²—but as to his beginning one cannot say when. Since there is no intervening prescribed term or concept or temporal interval by which the being of the Son is distinguished and separated from the Father, no marker is conceivable from which the Onlybegotten, disconnected from the life of the Father, arises from a beginning peculiar to him. 640. If then there is no other beginning which governs the life of the Son, but religious truth envisages only the Father inseparably as prior to the existence (*hypostasis*) of the Son, and the Father is unbegun and unbegotten, as even the testimony of our adversaries agrees, how does the one envisaged as in the Unbegun get a beginning to his being? 641. What harm does religious truth suffer from accepting the words our opponents, when they pose them as an absurdity in the question, "Is he who is, begotten?" Now our point is not that it was on the lines of the ill-bred interrogation of the Lord by Nicodemus,²²³ whereby he thought it impossible for one who exists to come to second birth, that the one who is, gets his begetting. We say that, having his being dependent upon the one who always and without beginning is, and journeying backwards with the one who enquires into the most ancient things, there before the enquiring mind in what lies behind, and endowed with all the attributes of the Father, he neither begins his being nor is unbegotten, but both was begotten and was, | as to causation confessing his begetting from the Father, but by the eternity of his existence not admitting that he once was not.

²²² Jn 6,57.

²²³ Jn 3,4.

642. Our abundantly ingenious sage however resists what has been said, and splits the being of the Onlybegotten from the nature of the Father, on the ground that the one has been begotten, the other is unbegotten. When the titles religiously attributed to the divine nature are so numerous, and no variation is perceived in them between the Son and the Father, but all are equally fitting for both, without mentioning any of the others, which reveal what they have in common, he fixes solely on the term “Unbegotten”; and he does not even accept the ordinary and accepted meaning of that, but invents a new sense for “Unbegotten”, excluding the generally held understandings of the term. 643. What could be the reason for this? He would not without a strong reason detach his thinking from the customary meaning of words, and behave so strangely in changing the signification of terms. He was well aware that, if the customary usage of the terms were preserved, he would find in it no power to overthrow sound doctrine, but if the words could be shifted from their common and accepted concepts, he would be easily able to use mischief with the word for doing mischief to doctrines as well. 644. For instance, for we should turn to the ill-treated words themselves, supposing he had accepted, as the common understanding of doctrines does, that God is called “Unbegotten” because he has not been begotten, their whole heretical contrivance would have collapsed, robbed of its trick with Unbegottenness. 645. If he had been persuaded by this argument, like almost all those who belong to the church of God, | to conceive the God over all as unbegotten in just the same way as he is invisible, impassible and incorporeal, allowing that each indicates what in no way belongs to God, like body, passion, colour and having his being from a cause,—if he had understood that this was so, their case for unlikeness would have had no force, since even our opponents concede that in everything else that is attributed to the God of the universe the Onlybegotten is like the Father. 212

646. To prevent this happening, however, he gives priority to the term “Unbegotten” over all the terms for God, those, that is, which refer to his transcendent power, and he has made this the starting point for his attack on our doctrine, transferring the explicit contradiction between “begotten” and “unbegotten” to the persons to whom the terms are applied. By this means he ingeniously deduces from the difference of terms that the beings differ, not allowing that he is called “Unbegotten” because a begotten one has been begotten, nor because he exists without having been begotten, but claiming that the one has his being constituted (by unbegottenness, the other)²²⁴ by begottenness, led to this con-

224 The bracketed words, lost in the Greek text but necessary for the meaning, were restored by Jaeger.

clusion by what subtle wisdom I cannot tell. 647. If the actual meaning of the terms themselves is considered, setting aside consideration of the persons to whom the terms are applied, the nonsense in the logic of what he says will be
 452M apparent. 648. | No one should think, because in a true account of the faith the Father is conceived as prior to the Son, that the order of the terms is at the same time applied to the rank and order of the persons of whom they are used. He should rather consider the actual terms in themselves, which of them
 213 is to be ranked higher in our account of the concept—the term |, I repeat, and not the thing signified by the term. He should consider which of the two represents the assertion of an idea, and which the negation of what is asserted; for instance, since for clarity I think we must use comparable terms to present the argument, educated and uneducated, wrathful and wrathless, passionate and passionless, and other terms of that kind, which of these is to be considered prior to the other? Those which negate the assertion, or those which put the idea forward? My own view is this: 649. Education, wrath and passion are prior in thought, and then comes the negation of the ideas conceived. It is the same with “begotten” and “unbegotten”. No one should through pretended reverence condemn the statement as setting the Son before his Parent. 650. We are not arguing that the Son is ranked or envisaged as before the Father, if the meaning of the terms “begotten” and “unbegotten” is what is under discussion. Therefore “begotten” signifies the assertion of a thing or concept, “unbegotten” the negation, as we have said, of that assertion. This means that the term “begotten” is to be envisaged as wholly prior to that of “unbegotten”. 651. Why then in these circumstances do they force that term which comes second in order to fit the Father, and think that the negative idea indicates and defines the being of him who is, and complain so bitterly at those who demonstrate the weakness of the argument?

XL 652–657. Eunomius’ attempt to maintain his position after the refutation by blessed Basil is feeble²²⁵

652. You see how Eunomius resents the one who caught him in his rotten and incompetent crime, and how he defends himself with what he can. And “what he can” means mere abuse and insult, an ability which he certainly possesses
 214 abundantly. For those who compose a writing | artistically there are certain conjunctive words which fill up gaps in the rhythm, and these bring euphony

225 The heading stands here in Winling; the MSS mark points to § 653.

and smoothness to the flow of the text. In just the same way, in most of what he says he adorns the prose with terms of abuse, using his abundant ability to insult. 653. Again we are “nonsensical,” again we “fall short of right reasoning,” we “handle words without enough of the necessary caution,” and “fail to understand the speaker.” All these and yet more are the terms used of our teacher by the voice of calm! Perhaps the cause of his anger is not irrational, and the author is right to be provoked. 654. What need was there for Basil to injure him by demonstrating the weakness of his case? Or to strip and expose to the more naïf hearer the blasphemy lurking under the persuasiveness of his sophistries? Why does he not draw a veil of silence over the impotence of the doctrine, but cites the wretch publicly, when pity should be shown and a quiet veil be drawn over his indecent publication? Instead he refutes and | shows up one who manages 453M to be respected among his own disciples as sage and subtle. 655. Somewhere in his works Eunomius says that, “‘Unbegotten’ accompanies God.” Our teacher attacks the expression, on the ground that what accompanies belongs to things considered external, whereas being is not an external, but the meaning which it connotes is being itself, insofar as something exists.²²⁶ At this our gentle and invincible one complains and quite overflows with reproaches, because on hearing the expression he also perceived the sense. What then did he do wrong, if he paid careful | attention to the meaning of what had been written? 656. If 215 he had without good reason censured what was said, your remarks are fair, and we shall not complain. But if you are ashamed at being refuted, why do you not delete the fault from the text, instead of abusing the critic? “All right,” he says, “but he did not understand what was intended by the statement.” 657. But what then are we doing wrong, if being human we guessed at the meaning of what was said? We have no insight into the secret of the heart. It belongs to God to see the invisible, to survey the shapes of things quite beyond comprehension, and to find out the “Unlikeness” of things not seen. We judge only by the words we hear.

XLI 658–665. What accompanies is not the same as what it accompanies²²⁷

658. The proposition is that “‘Unbegotten’ accompanies God.” From this statement we gather him to mean that to be unbegotten is one of the external

²²⁶ Basil, *CE* 15 (SC 299, 176–180).

²²⁷ This heading, placed here by Winling, is wrongly marked at § 666 in the MSS.

accompaniments of God. It is further stated, “or rather unbegottenness is itself being.”²²⁸ We are no longer able to follow this argument, suspecting much obscurity and oddity in the ideas expressed. 659. If unbegottenness accompanies God, and unbegottenness is a being, then surely the argument leads to an idea of two beings at once: that God is, in the same way that he is believed to be once and for ever, and that he has following him another being, which they entitle “Unbegottenness”, which is something other than the one whose accompaniment it is, just as our teacher says.²²⁹ If he bids us think like that, | he must forgive our simplicity, if we cannot quite grasp the subtlety of these thoughts.

216 660. If he rejects this account, and denies that he says there is a double being in God, one known because of deity, and the other because of unbegottenness, let him give himself the advice, being neither hasty nor malicious, not to be too free with abuse when contending for the truth, but to spell out to us who lack instruction, how what accompanies and what leads are not two different things, but both become one. For even while he is defending his statement, the absurdity nevertheless remains, and, as he himself puts it, “The addition of those slight words in no way corrects the inconsistency of what is said.” 661. What teaching is to be found in them, I have not yet been able to discover. The words he has written should be quoted verbatim.²³⁰ He says: “We said, ‘Or rather unbegottenness is itself being,’ not absorbing into the being what had been proved to accompany, but attaching ‘follows’ to the title and ‘is’ to the being. To summarize this the whole argument might run as follows: The term ‘Unbegotten’ accompanies, because the subject itself is ‘unbegotten.’” What interpretation are we to put on the words? “Not absorbing into the being,” he says, “what had been proved to accompany.” 662. How he understands “absorbing” as a substitute for “applying to”, some expert in riddles might tell us |; but
456M 217 how are other folk to understand the sense and sequence of thought? What | appears, he says, as an accompaniment is not proper to the being, but to the title. But what of the title, my clever friend? Is it distinct from the being, or concurrent with the very concept? 663. If the name is not proper to the being, how is the being distinguished by the title “unbegotten”? If being is embraced by unbegottenness which “belongs” to it (to use your own term), how is it here

228 Eunomius develops his position in *Apologia apologiae* from that in *Apologia* 7,10–11 (Vaggione 40 and 104).

229 Basil, *CE* 1 5 (SC 299, 176).

230 It is clear from the following quotations that Eunomius developed and clarified his position in response to Basil’s critique. See R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 215–216.

parted? And the term for the being accompanies something else, and the being in turn does the same. And what is the conclusion of the whole argument? “The term ‘Unbegotten’ accompanies God,” he says, “because it is itself ‘unbegotten.’” 664. Does he mean that this name accompanies God who is something else besides unbegotten? How then is Godhead defined by being unbegotten? Yet he also says that “Unbegotten” accompanies God who is unbegotten. Who will disentangle these puzzles for us: “unbegotten” preceding and “unbegotten” following, the title “being” at one time belonging closely, at another accompanying like something else? 665. Why too does he fuss so much about the term “unbegotten”, so that he rests the whole nature of Godhead upon it, and if this title is used, religion needs nothing else, while if it is not, the whole account of the faith is in jeopardy? If it is deemed not superfluous and irrelevant to treat these matters briefly, that is how I shall treat them.

XLII 666–691. An explanation of the meaning of “unbegotten” and a consideration of “eternal”²³¹

666. The eternity of the divine life, if one were to apply some definition to it, is something like this. It is apprehended as always in being, but does not allow the thought that it ever was not or will not be. 667. It is the same as with the shape of the circle: when | the line has gone round at an equal radius from the centre and joined up to itself, those who draw geometric figures say that the beginning of the figure is indefinite, since the line does not extend to either a recognized beginning or an apparent end, but when the line joins up with itself because of the distance from the centre being the same in all directions, recognizing a beginning and end is impossible; in the same way no one should object to the argument if we compare the infinite nature with a circumscribed figure. 668. It is not with regard to the limited circumference of the circle, but observing the similarity of the life which is in all respects beyond our grasp, that we say the idea is of such a kind, but with an eye to what resembles something which enjoys a life from every point of view beyond our grasp. | If we extend our mind from the present moment as from a central point and take it round, we may well be drawn around in the same sort of circle by what is impossible to apprehend, as we perceive that the divine life is continuous with itself and unbroken in every direction, and can appreciate that there is no limit anywhere. 669. We say of the eternity of God what we have heard from prophecy,

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²³¹ Winling has the heading a little earlier at § 665. The MSS mark it at § 675.

that God is “King before ages,”²³² and “reigns for the age,”²³³ and past the age and beyond, and that we therefore declare him superior to every beginning and extending beyond every end. Holding such a concept of him as befitting the God of the universe, we proclaim our thought by two titles, using “unbegotten” and “endless” to express the infinity, perpetuity and eternity of the life of God. 670. If only one of these were contemplated in the mind alone, and the
 219 other not referred to, then the | meaning of the one would surely be impaired by the omission of the other. It is not possible to express correctly the meaning of either through just one of them: to say “endless” is to show only the absence of any end, but tells one nothing about the beginning; to use the term “unbegun” demonstrates that the object denoted is superior to a beginning, but leaves ambiguous the question of the end.

671. Since then these names equally express the eternity of the divine life, this might be the right point to enquire how these people cut up the meaning of eternity, and say that the concept which denies a beginning concerns essential being,²³⁴ while they reckon that what negates an end is a matter outside being. They use some device or other to make this distinction, that to have no beginning is a matter of being, while to have no end is excluded as external to being. 672. Surely, since the two concepts apply to the same thing, either they ought to have included both in the definition of the being, or else, if they judged that one was to be rejected, they should have rejected the other with it. But perhaps they are quite determined to split the idea of eternity, classing one part with the essence (*ousia*) of the divine nature, and reckoning the other with those that are not—for they will use base concepts in considering such matters, and like birds with injured wings, are not able to raise themselves up to the sublimity of thoughts befitting God. If so, my own advice to them would be to turn their doctrine round the other way, so that they reckon “endless” as part of the
 220 being, and leave out | “unbegun” rather than “endless,” giving priority to future expectations rather than to the stale past. 673. For inasmuch as—and here my words reduce the argument to the level of infantile understanding for the benefit of childish minds—inasmuch then as the past life is of no account to the one who has lived it, whereas the whole interest of living people is focused on what awaits in the future, endlessness might be thought more highly to be prized than the absence of a beginning, since immortality is concerned with what is expected in the future. 674. So let ideas of the divine nature be either of a divine

²³² Ps 73/74,12.

²³³ Ps 28/29,10; 145/146,10.

²³⁴ The MSS add, *is not observed as concerning the eternal*, which Jaeger, following Wilamowitz, deletes.

order and sublime, or else, if they judge such things by human concepts, let the future be | prized by them more highly than the past, and let the being of God be limited by that, since all the past disappears with the passage of time, while what is expected gets all its reality (*hypostasis*) through hope.²³⁵ 460M

675. These are absurd and childish arguments, which I put forward as I might to children who sit and play in the street.²³⁶ It is impossible to examine the flat, earthbound opinions of heresy without being quite reduced to a juvenile children's game. 676. I think one thing could well be added to what has been said. Since the meaning of "eternal" is completed by both ideas, as the argument has shown, excluding both beginning and end, if the being of God were to be limited in the one respect, their account of his being would be cut off half-way and half-finished, being understood only as unbegun, and not possessing endlessness essentially in itself. 677. If on the other hand they combine both ideas to complete their account of the divine being by using them together, we should again observe the absurdity their account at once exposes: it will be shown by them | to be alien not only to the Onlybegotten, but also to itself. 221 The explanation is clear and hardly needs emphasis: the ideas of beginning and end are directly opposed to each other, and the meaning is different in each, as in other cases where things are directly contrary and there is no intermediate position. 678. If one is asked to explain "beginning", he will not give the same definition as he would for "end", but will define the meaning of "beginning" as its contrary. The negatives therefore of these two will differ from each other to a similar degree of contrariety. "Unbegun" will be accepted as meaning one thing, the negative of what is subject to the beginning, and "endless" another, negating the end. 679. If then they take these two and apply them to the being of God, that is, "endless" and "unbegun", they will show their God to be composed of two contradictory and incompatible things. The opposition of end to beginning will be naturally manifested by the idea which negates each of them. The opposites of contraries are certainly opposite to each other. 680. It is true to say that all things which are by nature the opposites of contradictory things are also opposite to each other, as one can see from examples. Water is opposed to fire; therefore the forces which negate these will also be opposed to each other. If moisture quenches fire, and drought negates water, then the contradictory qualities have preserved in themselves the opposition of water to fire; moisture is the acknowledged opposite of drought. 681. Since "beginning" and "end" are similarly opposed, the | terms which contradict these are also at variance 222

²³⁵ Cf. *Heb* 11,1.

²³⁶ Cf. *Mt* 11,16.

461M with each other in their connotation, I mean “unbegun” and “endless”. If | therefore they define only one of these as indicative of being (I now come back to the same argument), they will be going halfway in attributing to God what he is, saying that his being is described only as unbegun, without ever reaching his endlessness. 682. If on the other hand they use both in giving their account of his being, they will merely prove it to be composed of opposites in the way described, essentially split in his being by the opposition of end to beginning into the endless and the unbegun. Thus their God is a complex and composite thing, a compound of contradictions.

683. There is not nor will ever be any doctrine in the Church of God such as to declare the Simple and Uncompounded to be, not only pluriform and complex, but even composed of opposites. The simplicity of true doctrines supposes God to be just what he is, not able to be described by name or thought or any other power of intellectual apprehension, whether merely human, or even transcending angelic and all supermundane intelligence, ineffable and inexpressible and beyond anything that can be described in words, which has one name indicating its own nature, that it is alone above every name;²³⁷ and this name is also given to the Onlybegotten, because everything that the Father has is also the Son's.²³⁸ 684. It is his eternity, not his being, that is indicated by these terms in the orthodox | confession, I mean “unbegotten” and “endless”, since “unbegotten” shows that there is no beginning or cause prior to him, and “endless” indicates that his reign will reach no end. “For you are the same,” it says, “and your years shall not fail;”²³⁹ indicating by reference to being that he exists from no prior cause, and showing by what follows the unceasing and endless blessedness of his life.

685. But perhaps even some quite pious person will say, on considering our discussion of eternity, that it is difficult successfully to overcome the problem of the Onlybegotten with this explanation. When two doctrines collide, the solution must agree with one. Either we shall prove that the Son is also unbegotten, which is absurd, or we shall not allow him to be eternal, which is just what the blasphemers teach. 686. If eternity is defined as being without beginning and without end, we are obliged either to sin by not confessing the eternity of the Son, or else be driven to use the idea of unbegottenness in thinking about the Onlybegotten. How do we respond? If conceiving the Father as causally prior to the Son meant postulating some temporal marker prior to the exis-

²³⁷ *Phil* 2,13.

²³⁸ *Jn* 16,15.

²³⁹ *Ps* 101,26/102,27.

tence (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten, then perhaps our account of the Son would be at risk. 687. But in fact it is not allowed that in the case of the preeternal nature at some time it will not be, equally and similarly in the case of the Father's existence and the Son's;²⁴⁰ for where time is not, "some time" is abolished too. 688. But if | the Son is thought of as always in being, simultaneously expressed in the thought of the Father, why be afraid of attributing | eternity to the Onlybegotten, who has no beginning of days or end of life?²⁴¹ Just as he is light from light, life from life, good from good, wise, just and mighty and in every other attribute similarly derived as like from like, so also he is surely eternal from eternal. 464M 224

689. The contrary and contentious will seize upon the argument as if this logic implied that we must also suppose "unbegotten from unbegotten." But the contender should sober his mind and pay attention to his own words, since by confessing something as "from" the Father he has already rejected the thought of "unbegotten" in the case of the Onlybegotten, and no danger remains in calling him both "eternal" and "not unbegotten." 690. Because the being of the Son is not limited by any temporal period, but his boundless existence flows outward in every direction both before the ages and after them, he is correctly given the title "eternal"; yet because on the other hand his status and title as Son allows the idea of the Father to be correspondingly and simultaneously envisaged, he thereby escapes the imputation of unbegotten being, ever coexisting with the ever existing Father, as that divinely inspired voice of our teacher said, joined begotten to the Father's unbegottenness. 691. Our account of the Holy Spirit is the same, with a difference only of order. As the Son is joined to the Father, and having his being from him does not come afterwards in existence, so in turn the Holy Spirit holds close also to the Onlybegotten, who only in terms of | causation is thought of as prior to the existence (*hypostasis*) of the Spirit; temporal measurements have no place in preeternal life. So with the exception of the idea of cause, the Holy Trinity has no variance within itself at all. 225

240 The mss add: *and the confession of the Holy Spirit, too*, which looks like a scribal addition and is deleted by Jaeger.

241 *Heb* 7,3.

PART 3

Supporting Studies



Das Vokabular des Eunomios im Kontext Gregors*

Friedhelm Mann

1128 Lemmata umfaßt das Vokabular des Eunomios, das wir aus den Zitaten seiner Ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπολογίας ἀπολογία eruieren können, die Gregor seinem Ἀντιρρητικὸς λόγος eingestreut hat¹. Gregors Wortbestand umfaßt 13038 Lemmata nach dem in der Forschungsstelle Gregor von Nyssa erarbeiteten Index zu den Werken Gregors². Mithin stellt das Vokabular des Eunomios einen hohen Prozentsatz fremden Wortgutes im Wortschatz Gregors dar. Es muß jedoch gleich klargestellt werden: Das Vokabular des Eunomios ist kein Fremdgut im Vergleich mit dem Wortschatz Gregors. Fast allen Worten und Begriffen des Eunomios begegnen wir auch in Gregors Werk, auch in den Schriften, die gänzlich unbeeinflusst sind durch die Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomios.

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see: F. Mann, „Das Vokabular des Eunomios im Kontext Gregors“, in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El „Contra Eunomium 1“ en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 173–202. This article brings the reader to the first moments of *Lexicon Gregorianum*. As it is known, it is a massive project carried out by the Forschungsstelle Gregor von Nyssa (Münster) and edited by Friedhelm Mann, which was concluded after more than three decades of dedicated scholarly research. It comprises 10 volumes (the last one, edited by K. Savvidis and M. Dorn, is devoted to the nomina propria) and more than 13,000 entries.

1 Eine Übersicht über die Lemmata bietet in ihrem 1. Teil die Tischvorlage, die im Zusammenhang mit diesem Beitrag den Teilnehmern des Colloquiums ausgehändigt worden ist, die aus Raumgründen hier keine Aufnahme finden kann. Diese „Wortliste ΕΥΝΟΜΙΟΥ ΥΠΕΡ ΤΗΣ ΑΠΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΑΠΟΛΟΓΙΑ“ basiert auf den Passagen, die Jaeger durch den Sperrdruck als Zitate kenntlich gemacht hat, sowie auf der übersichtlichen (von den vielen Wiederholungen durch Gregor absehenden) Zusammenstellung der Zitate, die L. Abramowski im Artikel „Eunomios“ (*RAC* 6 [1966] 936–947) gegeben hat, zusammen mit der entsprechenden, von H.Chr. Brennecke verfaßten Stellenkonkordanz zum Artikel „Eunomios“ (*RAC* 18 [1975] 202–205).

2 Dieser Index zu den Werken Gregors von Nyssa, der die Grundlage für die Erarbeitung des *Lexicon Gregorianum* bildet, geht zurück auf die Initiative von H. Langerbeck, der schon in Frankfurt damit begonnen hat, das Wortmaterial sämtlicher bisher erschienenen Bände der GNO zu verzetteln und alphabetisch und nach Fundstellen zu ordnen. Diese Arbeiten wurden von der Forschungsstelle in Münster fortgesetzt durch das Einarbeiten des Wortmaterials von Vol. IX und der noch fehlenden Teile von Vol. VI. Eingearbeitet wurden weiter folgende (bisher noch nicht veröffentlichte) Schriften: *Infant, Python, Epist can, Bapt, Or dom, Beat, Hex, Op hom*.

Die Lemmata Eunomiana

Und es gibt nur wenige Ausnahmen: Wenn wir Lemma für Lemma überprüfen, so gibt es von diesen 1128 Lemmata des Vokabulars des Eunomios nur 32 Lemmata, die nur im Zitat des Eunomios und an keiner Stelle in Gregors Werk sonst begegnen. Allein diese 32 Lemmata sind der Wortbestand, der als eunomianisch, als typisch für Eunomios zu untersuchen ist. Natürlich sind diese verba Eunomiana keineswegs ein Wortbestand von der Art, daß sie nur bei Eunomios und sonst bei keinem anderen Autor anzutreffen wären: Es gibt nur ein einziges „hapax legomenon“ unter diesen 32 Lemmata und das ist φαιοτρίβων 1(1),32,18, wie es Jaeger auf Grund der Handschriftensituation wiederhergestellt hat gegen φακοτρίβων, wie es noch der Mignetext kennt³. Die übrigen 31 Lemmata Eunomiana, die wir bei Gregor in seinem Werk sonst nicht finden, sind keine ungewöhnlichen Neuprägungen des Eunomios, sondern wohl bezeugt bei anderen Autoren, und manche von ihnen finden sich nur deswegen nicht bei Gregor, weil der sachlich-inhaltliche Zusammenhang bei Gregor am anderen Ort nicht von der Art ist, daß gerade dieser Ausdruck und kein anderer hätte herangezogen werden müssen, – und nicht etwa weil Gregor sich gegen den Gebrauch der Lemmata im eigenen Kontext sperrt.

Wenn z. B. Eunomios um die ὀνόματα τὰ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν zu charakterisieren die Möglichkeiten durchspielt (1(1),276,23), τὰ κατὰ αὔξησιν und τὰ κατὰ μείωσιν – τὰ κατὰ πρόσθεσιν und τὰ κατὰ σύνθεσιν – und wenn er diese abstrakten Bestimmungen illustriert mit anschaulichen Beispielen, – mit Begriffen wie κολοσσαῖος, πυγμαῖος, πολυκέφαλος und μιξόθηρ, so sind diese Wörter ganz sicher ausgefallene Ausdrücke, – aber sie sollten auch als Beispiele auffällig und eindruckstark sein. – Keiner kann behaupten, daß diese Ausdrücke bei Gregor nicht vorkommen, weil Gregor sie nicht mag (oder gar deswegen nicht mag, weil Eunomios sie so markant gegen Basileios und seine Auffassung von den ὀνόματα τὰ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν ins Feld geführt hat). Es ist vielmehr so, daß die Sache, d. h. die Themen, die herangezogenen Vergleiche und Bilder in Gregors Werk die Anführung gerade dieser Ausdrücke (und keiner anderen) nicht erforderlich machen. Das unterstreicht die eine Ausnahme von diesen vier Ausdrücken: πολυκέφαλος finden wir in einem Werk, das weitab liegt von der Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomios, in *De beatitudinibus* im Zusammenhang mit der Beschreibung der πλεονεξία: sie ist nach Gregor οἷον τι πολυκέ-

3 Man achte auf Jaegers Begründung im *Apparatus fontium* zu φαιοτρίβων 1(1),32,18. Die verkürzte numerische Stellenangabe gilt auch im folgenden; dabei bedeutet 1(1) = *Contra Eunomium libri I et II*, GNO I; und entsprechend 1(11) = *Contra Eunomium libri III*, GNO II. Nach 1(1), bzw. 1(11) folgen, jeweils durch Komma abgetrennt, die Angaben von Seiten- und Linienzahl.

φαλον θηρίον μυρίοις στόμασι τῇ ἀπληρώτῳ γαστρὶ τὴν τροφὴν παραπέμπον (*Beat* v, GNO VII/2, 132,28–29). – In einem entsprechenden, angemessenen Zusammenhang hätte Gregor ohne Scheu und Vorbehalte auch die anderen drei Ausdrücke verwandt⁴. In gleicher Weise muß auch die Singularität folgender Lemmata Eunomiana in den Schriften Gregors als zufällig eingeschätzt werden: ἐπεξευρίσκω 1(1),347,20, – μεταδιώκω 1(1),49,22, – οἰκίσκος 1(1),63,5; 66,4, – πρόσθεσις 1(1),276,27, – ὠχρίάω 1(1),33,1, – σκύτος 1(1),33,23⁵. – Auch διχοτομέω 1(1),360,3; 361,5 und σωρεύω 1(1),356,23 sind nur belegt durch ein Eunomios-Zitat. Beide Ausdrücke sind aber auch biblisch. Und man wird keinen Bibelausdruck finden, der dadurch, daß Eunomios ihn verwandt hat, für Gregor anrühlich geworden ist. Ein in jeder Hinsicht unverfänglicher, neutraler, ja banaler Ausdruck wie τρίγωνος „dreieckig“ wäre beinahe in die Liste der allein von Eunomios verwandten Lemmata (1(11),174,28; 175,13; 177,13) gerutscht, wenn nicht Gregors *Epist* 20 geometrische, architektonische Detailbeschreibungen kennen würde, in deren Zusammenhang dieser Ausdruck von der Sache gefordert, selbstverständlich von Gregor verwandt wird (*Epist* 20, GNO VIII/2, 72,1,3).

Und so ließen sich noch viele Beispiele anführen, die zeigen können, nicht vorschnell bei dem nur bei Eunomios belegten Vokabular den Schluß zu ziehen, daß Gregor diese Ausdrücke in seinem Werk nie gebraucht, – oder bewußt vermieden hätte. Es gibt ganz wenige Ausdrücke, die so typisch „eunomianisch“ sind, daß sie nicht auch gregorisch sein können. Ganz sicher gehört zu dieser Kategorie der Ausdrücke der mit dem Vorwurf des σολοικισμός von Gregor belegte Ausdruck εἰσφρέω 1(1),44,7.10; 51,21). Gregor betont in diesem Zusammenhang, wem Eunomios mit dem gesuchten Ausdruck gefallen will: den Attizisten⁶. Gregor nennt Eunomios hier einen νέος ἀττικιστής 1(1),44,12) und zu diesem „neuen Attizisten“ passen gut die übrigen 19 Ausdrücke, die wir bei Eunomios finden: ἀνεπιστήμων 1(1),399,14; 402,29, – ἀνύσιμος 1(1),73,14, – ἄπειστος 1(11),114,20 (in der figura etymologica πείθειν ἀπείστους), – ἀπόρρησις

4 Wenn wir auch κολοσσαίος nicht wieder in Gregors Werk finden, so hat doch P. Alexander das Lemma κολοσσός (*Ecc*l v [GNO v, 367,10]) für Gregor gesichert. Das Lemma ist nicht einheitlich überliefert: Die Hälfte der texttragenden Zeugen (und von ihnen abhängig Migne) verliest a. a. O. κολοσσών in κάλλη στοών, – wahrscheinlich eine Majuskelverlesung auf Grund der Textsituation des Hyparchetyps, auf den diese Zeugen zurückgehen, der, wie Alexander vermutet, ein Unzialkodex war, dessen *scriptura continua* eine Reihe derartiger Fehler verursacht hat.

5 σκύτος wird neben μύλων zitiert und ist als Lemma genauso einzuschätzen. Die Sache, der inhaltliche Zusammenhang bringt es mit sich, daß Gregor auch in anderen Schriften auf μύλων zu sprechen kommt, auf σκύτος aber nicht mehr. (Akzentsetzung anders als bei Jaeger: vgl. die Angaben hierzu bei LS s. v.)

6 πάνν σοβαρώς τῇ λέξει τῶν εἰσφρησάντων ὑπαττικίσας 1(1),44,9–10).

1(I),29,10.11, – ἀστήρικτος 1(I),182,5; 182,11, – ἄτολμος 1(I),63,2; 66,3, – γλίχομαι 1(II),243,28, – διαθεσμοθετέω 1(I),303,9, – ἔμμονος 1(I),29,1, – ἐντήκω 1(I),29,2, – ἐξονυχίζω 1(I),165,24, – ἐπίληπτος und προσποίητος 1(I),391,21; 392,14 (als Attribute von εὐλάβεια), – πρόσρησις 1(II),264,6; 272,17, – θεμιτός 1(I)72,20; 121,13, – κηδεμών 1(I)311,7; 386,18; 282,19, – παρέγγραπτος 1(I),47,25. – Diese Ausdrücke zeigen ähnlich wie εἰσφρέω, daß sie gesucht sind. Sie zeugen von der Bemühung des Eunomios um stilistische Erhöhung in allen Punkten auch von der Wortwahl, vom Vokabular her⁷. Der Name des Eunomios reiht sich unter ganz erlesene Autoren griechischer Prosa, die vor ihm dieses Vokabular gebraucht haben – Xenophon, Thukydides, Demosthenes, Platon, Aristoteles, Plutarch, Lukian – und es ist schon reizvoll in der Einzelanalyse zu vergleichen, in welchen Kontext Eunomios diese Ausdrücke setzt und wie diese Ausdrücke die großen Attiker gebraucht haben. Hier nur streifend ein Beispiel, das zeigt, wie des Eunomios Sprache die Grenzen hoher Dichtung berührt. So heißt es in einem Zitat bei Eunomios: ἔμμονόν τι καὶ δυσέκνιπτον αὐτοῖς ἐντετεχνῆναι τὸ μῖσος 1(I),29,1. Das ist ein ganz von gesuchten Ausdrücken überladenes Kolon, ein Vokabular, das angemessener ist der Sprechweise der Tragödie, von der hier durch Eunomios ein berühmter Vers in Erinnerung gerufen wird, die Worte der Elektra des Sophokles: μῖσός τι γὰρ παλαιὸν ἐντέτχέ μοι (El. 1311). Dieser Vers wurde auch schon von anderer Prosa paraphrasiert. So kennt der Menexenos des Platon, dieser berühmte, als „Spiel der Ironie“⁸ empfundene λόγος ἐπιτάφιος, das hohe Pathos dieser Worte⁹. Leider ist das Zitat, das Gregor hier von Eunomios gibt, für jede weitere Prüfung zu kurz. Denn es wäre zu prüfen, ob der Zusammenhang, in dem die Worte bei Eunomios stehen, Gewicht und Schwere

7 Geradezu schmucklos erweist sich im Stilistischen – insbesondere wenn man auf die Wortwahl achtet – des Eunomios erste Schrift, sein Ἀπολογητικός. Basileios würdigt in seinem Ἀνατρεπτικός der rein stilistischen Seite des Ἀπολογητικός nicht viele Worte, während Gregor breit im Eingang seines Ἀντιρητικός den Stil des Eunomios lächerlich zu machen versucht und auf diese Polemik auch an vielen anderen Stellen seines Werkes immer wieder zurückgreift. Vielleicht sind Gregors Angriffe in diesem Punkte eine Reaktion darauf, daß die Ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπολογίας ἀπολογία gerade vom Stilistischen her unter den Eunomianern viel Bewunderung gefunden hat. Das besondere Bemühen des Eunomios um stilistische Erhöhung in seiner Antwort auf Basileios mag vielleicht wiederum Basileios mit seinem Ἀνατρεπτικός verursacht haben, den Eunomios auch in dem mehr äußeren Gewande der Erwiderung in den Schatten zu stellen suchte. (Vgl. hierzu auch Th.A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, Cambridge 1979, 444).

8 A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, München 1971³, 587.

9 καθαρὸν τὸ μῖσος ἐντέτχεται τῇ πόλει τῆς ἄλλοτρίας φύσεως (Plat. *Mx.* 245d). Indirekt wird hier der Haß des Hellenen gegen den Barbaren – ein Haß, den allein Athen absolut und kompromißlos unter Beweis stellt – dem abgrundtiefen Haß der Elektra an die Seite gestellt.

zeigt, oder ob man der Einschätzung Gregors folgen muß, der dem Eunomios hohles Pathos und Wortgeklänge vorwirft, der die καλλιφωνία (1(I),185,18; 344,23; 1(II),227,8) des Eunomios hier und an anderen Stellen mit herabsetzenden Bewertungen¹⁰ geißelt wie συρφετός λεξειδίων (1(I),26,11; 31,27; 326,3; 1(II),382,26), παταγός (1(I),383,14), στόμφος (1(I),331,27), ψόφος (1(I),383,17), – διακολλᾶ τὰ ἐν τριόδοις ἀπερριμένα τῶν λεξειδίων ῥακώματα (1(II),168,14), – πάλιν συνήθως τῷ κρότῳ τῶν λεξειδίων ἐνσατυρίζων τοῖς ῥήμασι (1(I),281,24).

Gregor wirft Eunomios auch an anderem Ort vor, daß er rede wie in einer Tragödie (ὥσπερ ἐκ τραγωδίας προτείνων ῥήσιν 1(I),269,30) – und auch Photios weist auf den ποιητικὸς τύπος des λόγος des Eunomios hin – und betont beim Vokabular, daß Eunomios schwerverständliche Ausdrücke (τῶν λέξεων ταῖς δυσεκφράστοις) gebrauchte¹¹. Das mag stimmen für den Textumfang des Werkes des Eunomios, den Photios noch überblicken konnte. In dem Vokabular, das wir auf Grund der Zitate, die Gregor gibt, überprüfen können, lassen sich wenige solcher λέξεις δυσέκφραστοι ausfindig machen¹². Das mag wiederum vor allem an

10 E. Norden (*Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, Darmstadt 1981⁸, 561) versucht die Leistungen des Eunomios im Stilistischen vor den Angriffen Gregors in Schutz zu nehmen: „man hat das Gefühl, daß man es mit einem Schriftsteller zu tun hat, der gut zu schreiben weiß und das Maß des Anstandes nie verletzt“, wobei Norden sich mit diesem Urteil vornehmlich auf den Ἀπολογητικὸς des Eunomios bezieht. Die „Urteile des Gregorios“ nennt er „echte Produkte fanatischer Orthodoxie“. Aber auch er gibt für des Eunomios Ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπολογίας ἀπολογία „nach den mitgeteilten Proben die übertrieben sophistische Diktion der Schrift“ zu. Soweit ich sehe, ist Nordens durchaus verhaltene Anerkennung das positivste Urteil über den Stil des Eunomios, das je geäußert wurde.

11 Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 138. – Zur Geschichte des „poetischen Ausdrucks“ in der Prosa und der Beurteilung des Gegensatzes von Poesie und Prosa im Altertum vgl. vor allem E. Norden a. a. O., 30 ff., 73 ff. Bei aller Betonung der grundsätzlichen Verschiedenheit (ἐτέρα λόγου καὶ ποιήσεως λέξεις ἐστὶν Aristoteles, *Rhetorica* 3,1 1404a28) wird gerade derjenige, der es versteht, in angemessener Weise seinem πεζὸς λόγος poetisches Kolorit zu verleihen, ohne in die Übertreibungen eines *Gorgias* oder *Agathon* oder *Alkidamas* zu verfallen, immer auch viel bewundert: vgl. z. B. was Cicero (*Orator* 67) und Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 10 1,81) über Platon in diesem Punkte sagen.

12 Bei dem Zitat ἀπόρρησιν τῶν ἐπαναστάντων 1(I),29,10 gesteht Gregor ein, er könne nicht verstehen, was Eunomios mit ἀπόρρησις meine: οὐκ οἶδ' ὃ τι νοῶν τὴν ἀπόρρησιν. Dieser Ausdruck – in Gregors Schriften sonst suchen wir ihn vergeblich – ist nun wirklich kein eindeutiges, nur in einem einzigen ganz bestimmten, fest umrissenen Anwendungsbereich gebrauchtes Wort. Je nach Zusammenhang bedeutet es „Verbot“, oder (wie ἀπαγόρευσις) auch „Versagen“, „Erschlaffen (der Kräfte)“, – oder „Zurückweisung“, „Aufgabe“ einer Untersuchung, – oder ganz konkret im entsprechend rechtlichen Zusammenhang „das sich Lossagen“ von einem Kinde, „Enterbung“, „Scheidung“ von einer Frau. Und wenn es

Gregor liegen, der ja zugibt und an vielen Stellen betont, er übergehe all den leeren Wortschwall, – konzentriere sich nur auf das Wesentliche der theologischen Aussage, das zu eruieren ihm viele Schwierigkeiten bereite¹³.

An einer Stelle aber hätte ein nicht leicht verständlicher Ausdruck beinahe zu einem zweiten „hapax legomenon“ des Eunomios geführt: 1(1),356,21 ist nach dem Ausdruck von dem Sämann der Spreu τὸν σπορέα τῶν ζιζανίων der unmittelbar folgende Ausdruck „der Anblick der Frucht“ τὴν τοῦ καρποῦ πρόσοψιν schwer verständlich. In Migne lesen wir dafür eine „Schlimmverbesserung“, eine „vox nihili“: καρποῦ πρόσοψιν „die Fäulnis der Frucht“. Die Tendenz der Veränderung ist klar. Beide Ausdrücke sollten inhaltlich assimiliert werden: Der Ausdruck der faulen Frucht steht inhaltlich parallel zum Ausdruck der Spreu. – Jaeger beläßt den Ausdruck der Handschriften πρόσοψιν im Text, versteht ihn aber mit einer „crux“¹⁴. πρόσοψις ist sehr wohl belegt als „das äußere Ansehen“, „die äußere Erscheinung“¹⁵, – und diese Nuance des äußeren vordergründigen Erscheinungsbildes der Frucht, die in Wirklichkeit gar keine ist, scheint mir sehr gut zu dem Ausdruck von dem „Sämann der Spreu“ zu passen.

Auch von dieser Gruppe der Ausdrücke gilt: kein Ausdruck ist so typisch der des Eunomios, daß er nicht auch ein Ausdruck des Gregor sein könnte. Ein schönes Beispiel dafür ist πᾶγῃ ἄφυκτος (1(1),164,14; 166,3). Meridier¹⁶ reiht ihn unter die für Eunomios charakteristischen Ausdrücke, weil Gregor a. a. O. einen entsprechenden Hinweis gibt: ὅρα τὰ ἄνθη τῆς ἀρχαίας Ἀτθίδος ... Aber Gregor hat gerade diese „Blüte des archaischen Attisch“ auch selbst gepflückt. Er hat diesen gesuchten Ausdruck der „unentrinnbaren Verkettungen und Schlingen“ in *De virginitate* (GNO VIII/1, 259,3) im Zusammenhang mit – wie kann es anders sein – den „molestiae nuptiarum“ gebraucht. – Ähnlich prangert Gregor

in dem Kolon, an das dieser Ausdruck relativisch anknüpft, um einen nach Gesetz und Ordnung abgewickelten Prozeß geht, der diejenigen mit Zwang zur Vernunft bringt, die sich gegen alles Recht Frechheiten herausnehmen (τῶν οὐκ ἐν δίκῃ θρασυνομένων ἐνόμῳ δίκῃ σωφρονεῖν ἡναγκασμένων), so wird mit den Worten ἀπόρρησιν τῶν ἐπαναστάτων als negativer Ausgang des Prozesses herausgestellt ein „Verbot“ für die, die in dieser Weise sich erhoben hatten, – zugleich aber ist durch diesen Ausdruck jede konkrete Festlegung in der Sache verwehrt, da die historischen Umstände, auf die Eunomios hier anspielt, für uns wie auch für Gregor (wenigstens nach dessen eigenem Bekunden) undurchsichtig sind.

13 Vgl. vor allem 1(1),383,14–16; 1(1),326,1–5; 31,22–32,4.

14 Jaeger im App. crit. a. a. O.: „locus corruptus videtur“.

15 Vgl. Pindarus, *Pythian* 4,51; Sophocles, *Ajax* 70; *Electra* 1286; Euripides, *Helena* 636; *Orestes* 952.1021. Wie die Vergleichsstellen zeigen, würde auch zu diesem Eunomios-Zitat Gregors und des Photios Hinweis auf die poetische Ausdrucksweise des Eunomios passen.

16 L. Méridier, *L'influence de la seconde sophistique sur l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1906, 74.

einmal ein auffälliges Vokabular als „typisch für Eunomios“ an, – fügt aber eben diesen Ausdruck auch seinem Vokabular am anderen Orte ein: Bei dem Ausdruck des Eunomios τοῦ γεννᾶσθαι παῦλα 1(11),224,11 weist Gregor (1(11),227,5.6) darauf hin, daß Eunomios hier wieder einmal prunke mit platonischer Schönrederei (ταῖς Πλατωνικαῖς καλλιφωναῖς περικομπήσειε) und unangemessen und ohne Zusammenhang (ἄσυναρτήτως) seinen eigenen Lehren das einfüge, was Platon in seinem *Phaidros* (245c) über die Seele gesagt habe. Wie Platon dort von παῦλα κινήσεως spreche, habe Eunomios in Anlehnung an Platon den Ausdruck παῦλα γεννήσεως gebildet. – Weitab von der Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomios beschreibt Gregor in *De hominis opificio* (PG 44, 165,1 ff.) den dauernden Fluß des materiellen und körperlichen Lebens, das dauernd durch Bewegung voranschreitet und nur dadurch fähig ist zu sein, daß niemals die Bewegung zum Stillstand kommt: ἡ ὕλική καὶ ῥώδης αὕτη τῶν σωμάτων ζώη, πάντοτε διὰ κινήσεως προΐουσα ... Der Ausdruck ῥώδης wird dann im folgenden illustriert durch eine Anspielung auf das berühmte Heraklitwort; durch die Ausführungen über die dauernde Bewegung wird Platonisches in Erinnerung gerufen bis hin zum paraphrasierenden Zitat, ohne natürlich namentlich Platon und seinen *Phaidros* zu erwähnen: εἰ δέ ποτε κινούμενον παύσαιτο καὶ τοῦ εἶναι πάντως τὴν παύλαν ἔξει (ebd. 165,13 f.). – Im Zusammenhang mit dem Texte des Eunomios hat Gregor παῦλα als mißbräuchliches Platonzitat entlarvt, – in seiner Schrift *De hominis opificio* möchte er zeigen, daß der Ausdruck am passenden Orte dem eigenen Texte in angemessener Weise eingewoben werden kann.

ἀνωτάτω, ἄνω

Gehen wir nun zu einigen besonderen Ausdrücken des Eunomios über, die sich in dem langen Zitat des dogmatischen Eröffnungsabschnittes finden. Gregor nimmt gleich Anstoß an den ersten entscheidenden Worten des Eunomios der „höchsten und erhabensten Wesenheit“ τῆς ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριωτάτης οὐσίας (1(1),72,1). Hier sollen jetzt nicht weiter die Einwände und Entgegnungen Gregors verfolgt werden: Eunomios unterdrücke bewußt den biblischen Ausdruck πατήρ, der doch auf die Verbindung von Vater und Sohn hinweise (1(1),74,5 ff.) und versuche mit ἀνωτάτω von vornherein die Wesenheit des Sohnes und Geistes von der höchsten Wesenheit abzugrenzen und diese als niedrigere, geringere Wesenheiten der höchsten unterzuordnen (1(1),75,19 ff.). Auch soll hier nicht darauf eingegangen werden, wie Gregor die verschiedenen Anwendungsmöglichkeiten von ἄνω bei diesem Ausdruck des Eunomios erwägt und zurückweist, wobei er die sich jeweils ergebende Absurdität breit ausmalt, wenn man z. B. diesen Ausdruck lokal (1(1),76,16 ff.) oder zeitlich (1(1),79,2 ff.) auffaßt, und

daß man in ähnliche Widersinnigkeiten gerät, wenn man mit ἄνω, ἄνωτάτω ein Höchstmaß, ein Übermaß an Gutheit und Macht der ersten Wesenheit, der des Vaters, gegenüber dem Sohne und dem Geist unterstellt (1(1)77,1ff.). Vielmehr interessiert für eine Untersuchung des Vokabulars des Eunomios im Wortschatz Gregors mehr vom philologischen Blickwinkel her auch die Frage, wie Gregor sich sprachlich gegenüber der besonderen Diktion des Eunomios rein vom äußeren Gesichtspunkt der Form und des Ausdrucks bei seinem Aufgreifen des Zitats verhält, ob und in welchen Zusammenhängen Gregor eine ähnliche Ausdrucksweise kennt.

Dieser adverbelle Ausdruck ἄνωτάτω in der attributiven Stellung innerhalb des Genetivausdrucks, eingerahmt von dem so ganz anders endenden Artikel τῆς und dem Substantiv οὐσίας dazu noch in der Stellung neben dem anderen Attribut, das aber auf die Endung von Artikel und Substantiv abgestimmt ist κυριωτάτης, – ist keineswegs eine gewöhnliche Ausdrucksweise des *sermo cotidianus* und ist bewußt so ausnehmend komponiert von Eunomios am Anfang dieser methodischen Untersuchung über den Ausgangspunkt der Theologie.

Diese anspruchsvolle Diktion wird bei den (insgesamt 12) Wiederholungen dieses Zitats auf den folgenden Seiten nicht immer durchgehalten. An 7 Stellen ist ἄνωτάτω in der Endung dem Artikel, Substantiv und dem anderen Adjektiv assimiliert: z. B. 1(1),73,21 heißt es: ἐκ τῆς ἄνωτάτης καὶ κυριωτάτης οὐσίας. Mag diese Assimilierung nun Gregor selbst anzulasten sein oder einem byzantinischen Librarius, – der Editor verbessert an diesen Stellen nicht; er weist zwar an 4 der 7 Stellen im *Apparatus criticus* verbannt ἄνωτάτω als *varia lectio* einer (bzw. an einer Stelle zweier) texttragender Handschrift(en) – gegenüber den 5 anderen Textzeugen aus (1(1),73,21; 75,18; 159,23; 161,21). In jedem Fall war die Form ἄνωτάτω in dieser Stellung zwischen Artikel und Substantiv und nebenstehendem Adjektiv in seiner Endung gefährdet und der Assimilierung ausgesetzt sowohl durch einen Zitierenden als auch durch einen Abschreiber¹⁷.

17 Auf diesem Wege des Assimilierens an die Umgebung wird überhaupt die adjektivische Form der Dreierendung ἄνώτατος, -η, -ον entstanden sein, – ein Superlativ, der in dieser Form keinen Positiv kennt, aber schon seit Herodot gut bezeugt ist. – Unterschiedlich ist der entsprechende Befund, wenn man einmal zum Vergleich das Werk des Philo heranzieht, der häufig den Ausdruck ἄνωτάτω in der attributiven Stellung gebraucht. Überall erscheint im Text die Adverbform und wird oft von allen Textzeugen gestützt. Die Editoren haben auch an den Stellen, wo Uneinheitlichkeit in der handschriftlichen Überlieferung vorliegt, ja auch dort, wo die Handschriften insgesamt die Endung im Numerus und Casus angepaßt haben, die adverbelle Form in den Text gesetzt. – Daß diese Ausdrucksweise bei Eunomios nicht singulär gewesen ist, zeigt ein anderes Zitat, das Gregor in seinem dritten Buch anführt (1(11),194,16.20), in dem Basileios von Eunomios vorgehalten wird, er (Basi-

Wenn die besondere Diktion des Eunomios in den Zitaten Gregors verändert erscheint, darf aber nicht daraus geschlossen werden, daß Gregor selbst diese Ausdrucksweise nicht kennt. Auch in seinen Texten ist sie anzutreffen, wenn auch nicht häufig: Es sind meist ganz exponierte und auffällige Stellen, wobei die Stelle 1(1),67,23, die dem Zitat des Eunomios vorausgeht, noch nicht einmal die auffälligste ist. Gregor spricht hier von dem höchsten Glück eines jeden Christen, für den Glauben Marter und Tod zu erdulden. Seine Ausführungen gipfeln in dem Satz, es sei für alle Christen die höchste Grenze des Glücks für diese Hoffnung auch etwas von dem ganz Schlimmen erduldet zu haben: εἶναι πᾶσι Χριστιανοῖς τὸν ἀνωτάτω τῆς εὐκληρίας ὅρον. Es ist auffällig, wie bei dem superlativischen Ausdruck sich leicht in der Umgebung – ähnlich wie bei Eunomios – das Wort πᾶς einstellt, um die superlativische Ausdrucksweise noch mit dem Hinweis der absoluten Geltung zu unterstreichen.

Ähnlich verfährt Gregor auch an den drei anderen Stellen, an denen er ἀνωτάτω gebraucht, die in Form und Inhalt einander in auffälliger Weise gleichen. Immer wenn Gregor anhebt, ganz im Grundsätzlichen das Sein zu unterteilen in Geschaffenes und Ungeschaffenes, in Intelligibles und Sinnlich-Wahrnehmbares, gebraucht er sprachlich eine fast formelhafte Wendung von der Unterscheidung auf der höchsten Ebene, von der höchsten Einteilung: πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἢ ἀνωτάτω διαίρεσις εἰς τε τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν τὴν τομὴν ἔχει 1(1)105,19; διχῇ τέτμηται κατὰ τὴν ἀνωτάτω διαίρεσιν ἢ τῶν ὄντων φύσις· τὸ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν αἰσθητὸν καὶ ὑλῶδες, τὸ δὲ νοητὸν τε καὶ ἄϋλον. Cant VI, GNO VI 173,7; – τῶν γὰρ ὄντων πάντων ἢ ἀνωτάτω διαίρεσις εἰς τὸ κτιστὸν καὶ ἄκτιστον τὴν τομὴν ἔχει 1(11),209,19. An verschiedenen Stellen von Gregors Werk treffen wir auf das gleiche Vokabular, die gleiche äußere Form der Diktion bei gleichem und ähnlichem Inhalt. Die nach diesen Einleitungsworten an den genannten Stellen folgenden Lehrreferate sind „so klassisch für antike Philosophie, daß sich weitere Erklärungen erübrigen“¹⁸. Und sie sind dies bis in die Wortwahl und in das Detail der Diktion, wie gerade diese Einleitungssätze es deutlich machen¹⁹.

leios) habe nicht zu behaupten gewagt, ὡς πρὸ τῆς ἀνωτάτω γεννήσεως καὶ συστάσεως ἦν (scil. ὁ υἱός).

18 E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nyse. Actes du Colloque de Chevetogne*, Leiden 1971, 239.

19 Auch hier ließen sich „weitere Erklärungen“ erübrigen. Ich greife nur als Beispiel heraus Sextos Empirikos, der bei seiner negativen Enzyklopädie des gesamten damaligen Wissens in seinen Πυρρώνειοι ὑποτυπώσεις (= PH) oder in Πρὸς Μαθηματικούς (= M) viele Einteilungen und Unterscheidungen „ganz zu oberst“ κατὰ τὸ ἀνωτάτω vorzunehmen hatte: διττῆς οὐσης κατὰ τὸ ἀνωτάτω τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων φύσεως ... τὰ μὲν ... αἰσθητά ἐστὶν τὰ δὲ

Es bleibt die Frage, warum diese Begriffe ἄνω, κατὰ τὸ ἄνωτάτω, wenn sie schon nicht in der Trinitätstheologie im Zusammenhang mit dem Vater gesagt sein dürfen, nicht doch auch als Attribute hinzutreten können zu dem obersten Prinzip allen Seins, der Urquelle alles Guten, der einen göttlichen Natur von Vater Sohn Geist – so wie Gregor von Nazianz (*Oratio* 31,10) es ausgedrückt hat: εἷς θεὸς μία φύσις ἡ ἄνωτάτω²⁰. Aber bei Gregors vielen Beschreibungen dieser höchsten göttlichen Natur finden wir diese Vokabel gewöhnlich nicht. Daß er hier Zurückhaltung übt, mag vielleicht an der Verwendung dieses Ausdrucks durch Eunomios liegen und an seiner intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit dem Häretiker in diesem Punkte. Aber man darf seine Zurückhaltung nicht überbewerten, so als ob Gregor eine entsprechend richtige Verwendung dieses Begriffs im Hinblick auf die Entstellungen durch Eunomios nicht mehr für vertretbar gehalten hätte. Denn es gibt eine Ausnahme und diese Stelle steht natürlich nicht im *Contra Eunomium*. In *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei* heißt es, daß nach Meinung der vielen bei der höchsten und göttlichen Natur ἐπὶ τῆς ἄνωτάτω καὶ θείας φύσεως (GNO III/1, 42,17) der eigentliche Wesensname Gottes θεός, θεότης sei. Gregor distanziert sich natürlich gleich von dieser Meinung. Aber seine Ablehnung hat nichts zu tun mit der Wortwahl bei der Nennung der höchsten und göttlichen Natur: da spricht Gregor und nur hier verwendet er im Zusammenhang mit Göttlichem ἄνωτάτω.

Nur ein kurzer streifender Blick auf die Positivform und den Gebrauch von ἄνω bei Gregor überhaupt: Wenn wir nach 1(I),72,1 – also nach dem langen Zitat des Eröffnungsabschnittes auf die Positiv – bzw. auf die Superlativform von ἄνω

νοητὰ (M VII 217), – oder τῶν σωμάτων κατὰ τὸ ἄνωτάτω διττὴ τίς ἐστι διαφορά τὰ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν αἰσθητὰ καθέστηκεν τὰ δὲ νοητὰ (M I 26). Ein Kapitel seiner Πυρρώνειοι ὑποτυπώσεις ist überschrieben: περὶ τῆς ἄνωτάτω διαφορᾶς τῶν φιλοσοφῶν und er unterscheidet „zu oberst“ 3 Philosophien δογματική, Ἀκαδημαϊκή, σκεπτική (PH I 4). (Fast wörtlich stimmen Gregors Worte mit Ps. Alexandros von Aphrodisias, *In Sophisticos Elenchos* 20,27 überein, wenn auch der inhaltliche Zusammenhang ein ganz anderer ist: νῦν προτίθεται λέγειν περὶ τῶν τρόπων τῶν παραλογισμῶν ... ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ τῶν ὄντων ἄνωτάτη διαίρεσις εἰς φωνάς ἐστι καὶ πράγματα) Die genannten Parallelen, zu denen sich noch viele andere (auch von anderen Autoren) anreihen ließen, verraten natürlich nicht eine bestimmte Quelle, auf die Gregor zurückgreift, sondern Gregors Vertrautheit mit philosophischer Terminologie und Fachsprache.

20 Man vergleiche auch Clemens von Alexandrien ἡ μὲν εὐσέβεια παντὶ που δῆλη τὸ ἄνωτάτω καὶ πρεσβύτατον αἴτιον σέβειν καὶ τιμᾶν διδάσκουσα (*Stromateis* II 154,1). Im Zusammenhang mit Gott und Göttlichem ist der Ausdruck häufig bei Philon von Alexandrien anzutreffen, z. B.: θεός δ' ἡ ἄνωτάτω καὶ μεγίστη δύναμις ὧν (IV 145,14), – τὴν ἄνωτάτω καὶ πάνθ' ὑπερβάλλουσαν θεοῦ δύναμιν (V 64,7), – ἕνα τὸν ἄνωτάτω νομίζειν τε καὶ τιμᾶν θεόν (IV 283,19).

im *Contra Eunomium* stoßen, dann wird entweder das Zitat aus Eunomios noch einmal wiederholt – oder es handelt sich um einen der vielen Versuche Gregors, das, was Eunomios mit diesen Worten sagen will, anzugreifen, zu widerlegen und die eigene orthodoxe Auffassung gegenüberzustellen. 1(1),253,5 kommt ἄνω zum ersten Mal in dem Kontext vor, in dem wir diesen Begriff dann häufig in Gregors Werk wiederkehren sehen. Wir stehen hier mitten in dem großartigen Bilde, das Gregor von Abraham zeichnet²¹: Abraham, der auszieht nach göttlichem Auftrag, obwohl er nicht weiß, wohin er zieht, nicht einmal den Namen dessen nennen kann, der ihm den Auftrag gegeben hat. Abraham der trotzdem voranschreitet und alle Namen von dem, der ihn schickt, wie δύναιμις und ἀγαθότης und daß er anfangslos ist und daß er durch keine Grenze eingegrenzt wird, daß er alle diese Namen benutzt als ἐφόδια πρὸς τὴν ἄνω πορείαν, „Wegzehrung für den Aufstieg nach oben“. So wie an dieser Stelle wird das Ortsadverbium ἄνω oft übertragen und im Vergleich von Gregor gebraucht, und es ist für ihn gleichsam der sprachliche Schlüssel zu einem Bereich, der im Zentrum seines theologischen Denkens steht: der obere, übersinnliche, geistige, heilige, ewige, himmlische, göttliche Bereich. Zu diesem Bereich ist ἄνω der sprachliche Schlüssel, weil Gregor ihn nicht mit angemessenen Worten beschreiben und erschließen kann, da es diese Worte nicht gibt. So greift Gregor zurück auf Worte, die eigentlich nur Geltung haben in dem Bereich der Sinne, in dem Bereich von Raum und Zeit und die erst in der Verbindung mit ἄνω tauglich werden für die Beschreibung des ganz anderen Bereiches, die durch ἄνω umgewandelt und verwandelt erscheinen: ὁ ἄνω λιμὴν (*Inst* GNO VIII/1, 82,4), οἱ ἄνω θησαυροί (*Prof* GNO VIII/1, 141,9), ἡ ἄνω γῆ (*Beat* 1, GNO VII/2, 78,5), ἡ ἄνω πορφύρα (*Flacill* GNO IX, 487,4): – Und so kennt es ja auch schon die Schrift, die *Gal* 4,25.26 dem gegenwärtigen Jerusalem (τῇ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ) das ganz andere, das himmlische Jerusalem in der Umschreibung mit ἡ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ gegenüberstellt, ein Zitat, auf das Gregor häufig anspielt²², – wie ja auch eine lange Reihe von Stellen sich einzig um das berühmte Apostelwort τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε (*Col* 3,2) rankt, sei es im direkten Zitat²³ oder in der Anspielung und Paraphrase²⁴. –

21 1(1),251,15–254,30: vgl. hierzu E. von Ivanka, „Ein Wort Gregors von Nyssa über den Patriarchen Abraham“, *Studia Catholica* 11 (1934) 45–47.

22 Vgl. 1(11),246,5; *Antirr*, GNO III/1, 153,24; *Cant* IV; VII; IX; XV; GNO VI, 129,20; 207,6; 377,13; 444,8; *Vit Moys* GNO VII/1, 119,16; *Trid spat*, GNO IX, 294,7.

23 z. B. *Cant* IX, GNO VI, 262,1; *Ref Eun* 43, GNO II, 329,17.

24 z. B. *Inscr*, GNO V, 77,19; *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 268,17; 277,10; 331,2; *Epist* 3, GNO VIII/2, 20,17; *Ecccl* V, GNO V, 360,15; 359,3; 359,17; 359,20; *Cant*, IX; XIV; IV; GNO VI, 126,6; 126,15; 262,16; 415,8; *Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 199,23.

Außerhalb des Streites mit Eunomios treffen wir im Zusammenhang mit dem Ausdruck ἄνω oft auf die positivsten und lichtvollsten Gedanken, die Gregor je in Worte gefaßt hat.

συντάττω

Ich greife aus dem langen Zitat des dogmatischen Eröffnungsabschnittes im weiteren heraus die Begriffe συντάττω (1(1),72,4) und ὑποτάττω (1(1),72,6). Das Wort συντάττω ist natürlich in keinem Fall „Fremdgut“ im Kontext Gregors. Es ist genau umgekehrt: συντάττω ist „Fremdgut“ in der Theologie des Eunomios. Die τάξις in seinem hierarchischen System kennt kein συντάττεσθαι seiner οὐσία nur ein ὑποτάττεσθαι; darum ist das Wort bei Eunomios von vornherein verknüpft mit der Negierung: μηδεμιᾶ μὲν τούτων συνταττομένης. – Für Gregors Auffassung kann diese Vokabel dagegen ganz treffend den besonderen Aspekt der Einbeziehung des Geistes in die Einheit von Vater und Sohn deutlich machen. Denn συντάττω heißt: Einzelnes zum Ganzen zusammenordnen, so daß es eine Einheit bildet²⁵. Und so geht es im trinitätstheologischen Zusammenhang bei συντάττειν immer ganz konkret um folgenden Aspekt: der Zusammenordnung, der Einbeziehung des Geistes in die Einheit von Vater und Sohn²⁶.

Auch bei Eunomios besteht die gleiche Festlegung der Vokabel συντάττω auf seine dritte οὐσία aber wie schon betont, in Verbindung mit der Negation: Eine σύνταξις der dritten οὐσία mit der ersten und zweiten gibt es nicht. – In des Eunomios ἔκθεσις πίστεως heißt es vom Geist: οὔτε μὴν ἄλλω τινὶ συντασσόμενον, – aber mit ἄλλω τινὶ ist nicht Vater und Sohn gemeint, sondern, wie der Kontext deutlich macht, andere Geschöpfe und Werke des Sohnes. Hier stimmt Gregor in der Sache mit Eunomios überein. Auch für Gregor gibt es natürlich keine σύνταξις des Geistes mit dem Geschaffenen. Aber er stimmt nicht überein mit Eunomios in der Diktion. In diesem Punkte spricht Gregor nicht wie

25 Ein gutes Beispiel für diese dem Wort zugrunde liegende Bedeutung an einer Stelle, die nicht speziell den trinitätstheologischen Zusammenhang betrifft, findet man im *Contra Eunomium* 1(1),363,30, wo es heißt, daß Eunomios all die vielen Vorstellungen, die man sich von dem göttlichen Leben bilden kann, in eine einzige Vorstellung zusammengefaßt habe, und weil Gregor deutlich machen will, was durch das συντάττειν bewirkt und erreicht wird, setzt er hinzu: ἐν τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν.

26 So heißt es (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 89,21): ἡμῶν γὰρ συντετάχθαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον ὁμολογούντων, – vgl. auch *Maced*, GNO III/1, 102,26; 104,31; 1(1),83,19; 1(1),120,11; 86,9; *Eust*, GNO III/1, 7,21.

Eunomios von οὐ ... συντασσόμενον sondern von οὐ ... συγκατατάσσόμενον. Den Geist in eine Ordnung zu setzen mit dem Geschaffenen ist für Gregor zugleich und vor allem eine Herabstufung, darum συγκατατάσσω²⁷. Von einer Zusammenordnung – selbst in der Form der Negierung – darf da nicht einmal von der Vokabel her gesprochen werden.

ὑποτάτω

Im langen Eunomios-Zitat fällt dann 1(1),72,6 das Wort ὑποταττομένης, womit Eunomios deutlich die „Unterordnung“ der dritten Wesenheit gegenüber den ersten beiden Wesenheiten in der Trinität herausstellt. Auf diesen Begriff geht Gregor in seiner Widerlegung ganz besonders ausführlich und breit ein. Denn hiermit hat Eunomios ein Wort seinen theologischen Ausführungen eingefügt, das vor allem durch das Apostelwort 1 Cor 15,27–28 von jeher Anstoß zum theologischen Nachdenken gegeben hat²⁸. Sechsmal hintereinander fällt allein in diesen 2 Versen der Schrift das Wort ὑποτάσσω und verleiht schon durch die Wiederholung desselben Wortes der Aussage eine geballte Kraft und Wucht, einen höchsten Grad von Eindrucksstärke, die der Inhalt der Aussage ohnehin schon in sich birgt.

Die Masse der 108 Belege dieses Wortes bei Gregor stehen im Zusammenhang mit diesem Apostelwort. Das liegt einmal daran, daß Gregor diesem Apostelwort eine eigene Schrift (*In illud: Tunc et ipse*) gewidmet hat. – Zum anderen aber liegt es daran, daß in unserem Index alle Schriften von Vol. III/1 aufgenommen worden sind, – auch die schon vom Editor als suspekt angesehene, heute allgemein Gregor abgesprochene Schrift *Adversus Arium et Sabellium de patre et filio*, in dem dieses Apostelwort eine große Rolle spielt²⁹.

Insgesamt gibt es 38 Belege dieses Wortes in der Kontroverse mit Eunomios. Bei einem Großteil dieser Belege steht der Begriff ὑποτάσσω wieder im Kontext biblischer Stellen. Denn Gregor prüft die Verwendung des Wortes bei Eunomios an dem Gebrauch, den dieser Begriff in der Bibel erfährt. Im Vordergrund steht dabei wiederum vorrangig 1 Cor 15,27–28, dann vor allem das – schon in

27 οἱ καθαρινοῦντες τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος δόξαν καὶ τῇ ὑποχειρίῳ φύσει συγκατατάσσοντες, *Maced*, GNO III/1, 102,18; vgl. auch *Or dom* III, GNO VII/2, 40,3; – 1(1),59,25; 1(II),106,21.

28 Zur Geschichte der Exegese dieses Apostelwortes in den ersten Jahrhunderten vgl. vor allem: E. Schendel, *Herrschaft und Unterwerfung Christi. 1. Korinther 15,24 in Exegese und Theologie der Väter bis zum Ausgang des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 1971.

29 Auf den Seiten *Arium*, GNO III/1, 78–79, finden wir das Wort ὑποτάσσω 20 mal. – 34 mal kommt es in *Tunc et ipse* vor.

dieser Paulusstelle zitierte – Psalmwort 8,7; dann *Ps* 46,4; 17,48; 143,2; – wobei von Gregor immer wieder herausgestellt wird, daß diese Bibelstellen für das Verständnis des Eunomios-Wortes nicht hilfreich sind.

Entschieden wird von Gregor des Eunomios Lehre von der ὑποταγή des Geistes gegenüber Vater und Sohn zurückgewiesen, deutlich werden die Motive aufgedeckt, die Eunomios zur Annahme der ὑποταγή veranlaßten und mit Nachdruck wird die orthodoxe Auffassung von der Zusammenordnung des Geistes mit Vater und Sohn betont, wie oben schon dargestellt.

Es ist schon auffällig, wie stark – aufs Ganze gesehen – die Belege von ὑποτάσσω im Zusammenhang stehen mit zitierten Texten, in denen das Wort vorkommt. Sieht man einmal ab von den Stellen, die im Zusammenhang mit entsprechenden Aussagen des Eunomios stehen, und den Stellen, die ein Bibelwort aufgreifen, so bleiben von den 108 Belegen insgesamt allein 8 übrig, die Gregors Gebrauch dieses Begriffs zeigen unbeeinflußt von irgendeiner Quelle. Und dieser Gebrauch ist frei von jeder theologischen Problematik und Relevanz³⁰.

παράλλαττω

Auch παράλλαττω gehört zu den reich belegten Worten Gregors. An insgesamt 94 Stellen erscheint es in seinen Texten. Und hier ist es vor allem die Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomios, die die hohe Belegzahl verursacht hat, die sich wiederum zusammensetzt einmal aus den Stellen der direkten Zitate des Eunomios, zum andern aus den vielen Stellen, in denen Gregor die Ausführungen des Eunomios widerlegt. Für Eunomios ist dieser Ausdruck wichtig. Eunomios geht es um den Nachweis, daß, wie er differenziert, die Wesenheiten, Wirksamkeiten und Werke von Vater, Sohn, Geist grundverschieden sind, – und um den Nachweis, daß die Verschiedenartigkeit der Werke von Vater, Sohn, Geist auch die ihrer Wirksamkeiten deutlich macht: καὶ τῶν παρηλλαγμένων ἔργων παρηλλαγμένης τᾶς ἐνεργείας ἐμφαινόντων (1(1),73,2). Ähnlich sprachlich

30 Fast verselbständigt erscheint da der Begriff des Partizips Perfekt Passiv: οἱ ὑποτεταγμένοι als die Untergebenen, die Untertanen (vgl. z. B. 1(1),186,30; 200,22). – Und herausfallend in seiner besonderen Bedeutung und ganz am Rande nur vereinzelt vorkommend ὑποτετάχθαι im Zusammenhang mit dem, was in einer Schrift, in einer Rede untergeordnet, nachgestellt ist: τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα also in der Bedeutung von „das Folgende“, – so im Titulus von *De virginitate* (GNO VIII/1, 247), – und einmal mitten im Text von *Bapt* (GNO X/2, 370,14).

eindrucksstark durch die Verdoppelung des Begriffs im selben Kolon wird diese sich einander bedingende Verschiedenartigkeit im 3. Buch seiner Schrift ausgedrückt: τῶν παρηλλαγμένων οὐσιῶν παρηλλαγμένοι πάντως καὶ αἱ σημαντικαὶ τῆς οὐσίας εἰσὶ προσηγορίαι (1(11),166,12). Viele Belege von diesem Verbum fallen in den Bereich von Gregors Darstellung der Gegenposition außerhalb des engeren Zusammenhangs der Eunomioszitate. Wenn betreffs der Trinität die Einheit des Wesens betont und die Verschiedenartigkeit des Wesens von Vater, Sohn, Geist zurückgewiesen wird, so gebraucht Gregor meist das negierte παραλλάττεσθαι. Als Beispiel greife ich heraus eine Stelle in *De instituto Christiano*, einer Schrift, die ganz und gar nicht die trinitätstheologische Problematik zum Thema hat, diese aber doch an einer Stelle streift (*Inst* GNO VIII/1, 42,6ff.). Und diese wiederum ist bedeutungsschwer und von theologischem Gewicht, weil sie geprägt ist von der formula μία οὐσία τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις. Der Formel geht voraus der Nachweis der einen θεότης dieser seligen und ewigen Trias: μίαν τῆς μακαρίας τε καὶ αἰδίου τριάδος θεότητα μηδαμῶς μηδαμῇ παρηλλαγμένην (42,8). Das ist eine doppelte und eindringliche Verneinung jedweden Versuches der Differenzierung der Göttlichkeit der Trias, – und die doppelte Verneinung ist zugleich eine doppelte Unterstreichung der vorausgehenden positiven Umschreibung μίαν θεότητα.

μηδαμῶς μηδαμῇ παρηλλαγμένην – in diesem *Tempus* und *Genus verbi* treffen wir das Verbum an fast allen Stellen wieder, – und das nicht von ungefähr: Für Eunomios ist die Aktionsart des Perfekts im Passiv wichtig. Es geht ihm um die resultative Geltung, die durch das Perfekt im Griechischen zum Ausdruck kommt, um den durch die vollendete Veränderung des παραλλάττεσθαι bewirkten bleibenden, für immer fortdauernden Zustand des Verändertseins, des Andersseins der Wesenheiten, Wirksamkeiten und Werke von Vater, Sohn, Geist.

Als Gregor nach der Anführung des gewichtigen Zitats (1(11),96,24–97,5), in dem Eunomios γέννησις als den Begriff bestimmt, der die Natur des Sohnes aussagt, und das mit den Worten endet τὸ παραλλάχθαι τὰς οὐσίας ἀλλήλων πιστούμεθα, – anhebt mit einer grundlegenden Erörterung der Bedeutung des Wortes, ist diese abgestellt auf des Eunomios Verwendung dieser Aktionsart des Perfekts im Passiv. Nach Gregor verwendet man diesen Ausdruck bei Veränderungen des Gesundheitszustandes (1(11),97,13–19), bei Veränderungen im moralisch-ethischen Bereich (1(11),97,19–98,1), schließlich bei Veränderungen der Qualitäten der Elemente, Qualitäten wie warm – kalt, feucht – trocken (1(11),98,1–7), dehnt diesen Anwendungsbereich dann aus auf Gegensätze wie Krieg und Frieden, Leben und Tod (1(11),98,7–11). Auf dem Hintergrund dieser Bedeutungsanalyse ist es für Gregor leicht, das Blasphemische der Aussage des Eunomios herauszukehren (1(11),98,12ff.): Auf den trinitätstheologischen

Zusammenhang übertragen bedeutet es für den Sohn immer eine Minderung der Qualität seiner οὐσία wenn nicht gar das Gegenteil gegenüber der οὐσία des Vaters.

Prüft man aber Gregors Verwendung dieses Wortes in seinen Schriften sonst, so muß man feststellen: Gregor hat hier nicht beschrieben, wie er dieses Wort in seinen eigenen Schriften gebraucht: beschrieben hat er den Gebrauch des Wortes in der von ihm überblickten griechischen Literatur. In seinem Werk gibt es kaum Beispiele, mit denen sich diese Bedeutungsfelder und Anwendungsbereiche belegen ließen, so daß man sie bei einem Lexikonartikel als Grundlage der Differenzierung und Einteilung der Anwendungsbereiche hätte zugrunde legen können. Die meisten Belege ranken sich bei Gregor vielmehr um die von Eunomios unterstellte Verschiedenartigkeit der οὐσῆαι in der Trias und deren Zurückweisung durch Gregor³¹.

ἀγεννησία

Schon die wenigen Beispiele zeigen, was sich durch andere weiter ausführen ließe: Jedes Wort, jeder Begriff des Eunomios wird ernst genommen. Auch bei der beiläufigsten Vokabel wird genau geprüft, ob sie nicht auch ein weiteres Mosaiksteinchen darstellt zu dem Gesamtbilde der Häresie. Gerade die um die tragenden Begriffe οὐσία, ἐνέργεια, ἔργα sich rankenden Attribute und Verbaussagen erweisen sich als demaskierend für das gesamte System des Eunomios. Hier gilt es für Gregor Position zu beziehen: im eigenen Kontext die eigene Auffassung dagegen zu halten. Falsches, ein Vergreifen im Vokabular wird angeprangert und konfrontiert mit orthodoxer Richtigstellung. Gregor kennt bei alledem keine Berührungsängste. Nie wird ein Ausdruck ängstlich vermieden, weil Eunomios ihn gebraucht oder mißbraucht hat. Und selbst die einschlägigsten, am meisten charakteristischen Begriffe der Häresie des Eunomios sind so schlimm nicht, daß sie nicht auch – richtig gestellt – positiv im Kontext Gregors erscheinen können. Das gilt auch von dem Schlüsselwort der Theologie des Eunomios, von der κρηπίς καὶ ὑποβάθρα τῆς αἱρετικῆς πυργοποιίας (1(1),204,9), von dem ὀρμητήριον, der „Operationsbasis“ gegen orthodoxe Theologie (1(1),212,11–13), von dem σόφισμα (1(1),211,27), von dem Götzen des Eunomios (1(1),256,4) – von ἡ πολυθρύλητος ἀγεννησία (1(1),204,9). Natürlich steht die Masse der Belege dieses Begriffs im *Contra Eunomium* im Zusammenhang

31 Von den 94 Belegen bleiben nur 10 übrig, die gänzlich unberührt sind von der Problematik, die Eunomios mit diesem Begriff verbindet.

der Zurückweisung dieses Ausdrucks, wenn er aufgefaßt und gedeutet wird, so wie es Eunomios tut, wobei die vielen Belege durchaus nicht auf einer großen Zahl von Zitaten aus des Eunomios Schrift basieren, die durch die dauernde Wiederholung durch Gregor die Belegzahl dieses Begriffs hätte anschwellen lassen. Das ist auch ein Punkt seines Vorwurfs, wie ihn schon Basileios in seinem Ἀνατρεπτικός λόγος gegenüber Eunomios erhoben hat, daß dieser bewußt zunächst diesen Begriff unterdrücke³². Gregor selbst gebraucht diesen Terminus häufig von dem entscheidenden Passus an und versucht die verschleiernde Argumentation des Eunomios zu entlarven und auf den harten, entscheidenden Kern zurückzuführen: ἀγεννησία ist nach Eunomios die οὐσία des Höchsten, des Vaters in der Trias, ist die οὐσία, die φύσις Gottes.

Prüft man nun diesen für die Theologie des Eunomios alles entscheidenden Begriff im Kontext Gregors, so ergibt sich deutlich, daß auch dort, wo Gregor es unterläßt, seine Distanzierung gegenüber diesem Begriff ausdrücklich zu betonen, der Zitatcharakter mitschwingt, so als ob der Begriff im Kontext Gregors Fremdgut wäre. Der Editor hat dies gleich an der ersten Stelle, an der ἀγεννησία auftaucht, augenfällig zum Ausdruck bringen wollen durch die Verwendung der Anführungsstriche (1(1),132,7.8), im weiteren hat er dann den für das Zitat üblichen Sperrdruck bei der Erwähnung von ἀγεννησία gewählt, obwohl damit keine konkrete Stelle in des Eunomios Schrift gemeint ist.

Aber es gibt auch viele Stellen, wo Gregor ohne Distanzierung und Polemik diesen Begriff verwendet: es sind die vielen Stellen, an denen Gregor die falsche Verwendung des Begriffs ἀγεννησία richtig zu stellen versucht, seine eigene Meinung vorträgt oder diejenige rekapituliert, die schon sein Bruder im Ἀνατρεπτικός λόγος gegeben hat: ἀγεννησία kann nicht die οὐσία Gottes bezeichnen, der Begriff wird κατ' ἐπίνοιαν Gott zugesprochen; ἀγεννησία und πατρότης gehören zusammen, und wie wiederum Basileios schon betont hat, schließt die ἀγεννησία des Vaters – γεννητῶς – auch die Anfangslosigkeit, Ewigkeit des Sohnes ein. Denn mit ἀγεννησία wird versucht, τὸ ἀναρχον τῆς ζωῆς Gottes auszudrücken. In diesem Sinne ist für Gregor ἀγεννησία dann auch einer der θεοπρεπῆ ὀνόματα, – aber nur eben einer unter den vielen anderen, die gleichrangig Gott dem Vater zugesprochen werden: πατρότης, δύναμις, ἀφθαρσία, ἐξουσία, ἀϊδιότης καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα. ἀγεννησία ist also durchaus für Gregor ein „positiver“ Gottesbegriff, der neben den vielen anderen in dem Katalog der Gottesbegriffe erscheinen kann, – aber eben nur kann! Denn der objektive Befund sieht anders aus: In keinem der vielen Kataloge der θεοπρεπῆ ὀνόματα in dem

32 Vgl. Gregors Ausführungen 1(1),163,25 ff im Zusammenhang mit dem cap. 4 des Ἀνατρεπτικός λόγος des Basileios.

weit gespannten Werk Gregors werden wir ἀγεννησία sonst noch wiederfinden. Zwischen dem 1. Buch von *Contra Eunomium* (1(1),132,7) und dem 3. Buch (1(11),305,21) gebraucht Gregor den Begriff ἀγεννησία an 117 Stellen – indem er ihn zitiert oder ihn voll Polemik anprangert oder auch sachlich nüchtern mit dem Begriff ringt und dem, was er nach orthodoxer Auffassung aussagen kann. Sonst taucht dieses Schlüsselwort der Theologie des Eunomios im Kontext Gregors im gesamten anderen Werk nicht mehr auf³³. Aufgezwungen durch die Kontroverse mit Eunomios und die Auseinandersetzung mit seinen Texten stellt sich Gregor diesem Begriff in der dieser Kontroverse gewidmeten Schrift, läßt sich aber sonst in seinen Schriften allgemein und in der Trinitätstheologie im besonderen nicht mehr – auch nur auf die Erwähnung dieses σόφισμα der Neuarianer ein.

Nach diesem allgemeinen skizzierenden Überblick sollen nun im folgenden die Stellen von ἀγεννησία im Werk Gregors im einzelnen aufgeführt werden. Dies soll geschehen in der Form und Anordnung eines Lexikonartikels³⁴, der nach dem oben geschilderten Befund von nichts anderem handelt als von der Auseinandersetzung Gregors mit Eunomios auf einem der wichtigsten Felder der Trinitäts- und Gotteslehre:

33 Die gleiche Tendenz zeigt auch das Pendant zu ἀγεννησία das Adjektiv ἀγέννητος. 448 Belege gibt es von diesem Adjektiv im Werk Gregors. Davon begegnen allein 437 Stellen in den Schriften Gregors gegen Eunomios, und nur 11 Belege finden sich in dem weitgespannten Werk Gregors sonst. Davon kommen wiederum 5 Stellen in den *Opera dogmatica minora* vor, an denen Gregor ähnlich wie in den Schriften gegen Eunomios die Lehre der Neuarianer in diesem Punkte verwirft und die orthodoxe Auffassung darstellt (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 56,16; 56,20; 57,2; *Simpl*, GNO III/1, 65,10; 65,15). Allein die restlichen 6 Stellen sind unbeeinflusst von der Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomios: Die drei Stellen in *De hominis opificio* verwerfen die Hypothese, daß die ὕλη wie Gott als ἀγέννητος eingeschätzt werden könnte (PG 44, 212,17.18.24). Bei den anderen drei Stellen handelt es sich im Zusammenhang mit ἀγέννητος um die Beschreibung des ἰδίωμα des Vaters in der Trinität gegenüber den ἰδιώματα von Sohn und Geist (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 90,2; 106,3; *Or dom* III, GNO VII/2, 39,15–44,11; vgl. W. Jaeger, „Eine dogmatische Interpolation im Text von Gregors Schrift *De oratione dominica* und ihr kirchenpolitischer Hintergrund“, in: W. Jaeger, *Gregor von Nyssa's Lehre vom Heiligen Geist*, Leiden 1966, 133, 29). – Was den Gebrauch von ἀγεννησία und ἀγέννητος angeht, hält sich Gregor also streng an die Empfehlung des Basileios im Ἀνατρεπτικός λόγος (PG 29, 516,51 ff.), diesen Begriff in der theologischen Diskussion möglichst nicht zu verwenden.

34 Im 2. Teil der in Anmerk. 1 erwähnten Tischvorlage finden sich neben ἀγεννησία auch die Lexikonartikel der (in diesem Beitrag im Vordergrund stehenden) Lemmata ἄνω, ἄνωτερος, ἄνωτάτω, συντάττω, ὑποτάττω, παραλλάττω, die aber hier aus Raumgründen keine Aufnahme gefunden haben.

ἀγεννησία, ἡ Ungezeugtheit

- A. Auffassung des Eunomios – nach Gregor: (ἀ. das Schlüsselwort d. Theol. d. Eun.) – (ἀ. die οὐσία des Vaters, anders die οὐσία Sohnes) – (ἀ. die οὐσία, φύσις Gottes)
- B. Gregors Entgegnung: (ἀ. ist nicht οὐσία; der Begriff ἀ. wird κατ' ἐπίνοιαν Gott zugesprochen) – (mit ἀ. wird τὸ ἄνευ αἰτίας, τὸ ἄναρχον τῆς ζωῆς Gottes bezeichnet) – (ἀ. und πατρότης unzertrennlich) – (ἀ. des Vaters schließt γεννητῶς die Ewigkeit des Sohnes ein) – (ἀ. und die anderen θεοπρεπῆ ὀνόματα) – (der negative Charakter des Begriffs ἀ.) – (zur Identität von ἀ. und ἀπλότης, – αἰδιότης, ἀφθαρσία) – (ἀ. bewirkt διπλὴ οὐσία) – (ἀ. ohne [Schrift-]Bezeugung).
- A. Auffassung des Eunomios – nach Gregor:
- a) ἀ. das Schlüsselwort d. Theol. d. Eun.: ἡ πολυθρύλητος ἀ. ἐκείνη ... ἡ κρηπίς καὶ ἡ ὑποβάθρα τῆς αἰρετικῆς πυργοποιίας 1(1),204,9; (ἀ. „Privatgott“ d. Eun.) τὸν ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ θεόν, ὃν διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἀ. ἀνέπλασε 1(1),284,19; (d. Eun. „panische Angst“ um ἀ.) ἡ τοσαύτη περὶ τὸ τῆς ἀ. ὄνομα πτόησις 1(1),217,19; (die „Kriegsmaschine“ d. Haeresie) διέπεσεν ἂν ὅλον αὐτοῖς τὸ μηχανήμα τῆς αἰρέσεως, ὑποσπασθέντος τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀ. σοφίσματος 1(1),211,27; („Operationsbasis“ gegen orthod. Theol.) τὸ τῆς ἀ. ὄνομα ... τῆς κατὰ τοῦ δόγματος ἡμῶν καταδρομῆς ὀρμητήριον 1(1),212,11; τῶν πολεμούντων ἡμῖν ἡ περὶ τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς ἀ. σκιαμαχία 1(11),234,7; vgl. 1(1),275,10; 132,7; 132,8; 211,11; 317,30.
- b) ἀ. die οὐσία des Vaters, anders die οὐσία Sohnes: ἡ πολυθρύλητος ἀ. ἡ μόνη κατὰ σέ τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν οὐσίαν χαρακτηρίζουσα 1(1),384,9; τὴν ἀ. οὐσίαν φασὶ καὶ τὴν γέννησιν ὡσαύτως εἰς οὐσίαν ἀνάγουσιν 1(1),174,15; τὸν μὲν ἐκ τῆς (ἀ. τὸν δὲ ἐκ τῆς) γεννήσεως οὐσιώσθαι λέγων 1(1),212,18; προσφυῶς, καθὼς αὐτὸς ὀνομάζει, ὑπὸ τῆς ἀ. ἡ οὐσία περιλαμβάνεται 1(1),217,7; μόνον συμφυὲς ἀξίωμα τὴν ἀ. ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς δογματίζουσι 1(1),163,16; vgl. 1(1),386,24; 173,24; 175,4; 233,7; 236,24; 162,26; 163,28; 1(11), 247,26; (ἀ. d. Vaters und γέννησις d. Sohnes als kontradiktorische Gegensätze) τὸ γὰρ μὴ ἔκ τινος ὑπερκειμένης αἰτίας εἶναι τὸν πατέρα ... οὗτοι ἀγεννησίαν ὠνόμασαν ... καὶ τὴν ἐκ πατρὸς τοῦ μονογενοῦς ὑπόστασιν τῷ τῆς γεννήσεως διασημαίνουσι ῥήματι, εἴτα συνθέντες τὰς δύο φωνὰς τὴν ἀ. τε καὶ τὴν γέννησιν ἀντιφατικῶς ἐναντιούμενας ἀλλήλαις 1(1),232,2.5; οὐχὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ πατρὸς ἀγεννήτως εἶναι φασιν, ἀλλ' ἀναστρέψαντες τὸν λόγον οὐσίαν τὴν ἀ. ὀρίζονται, ἵνα τῇ πρὸς τὸ γεννητὸν ἀντιδιαστολῇ τὸ τῆς φύσεως παρηλλαγμένον διὰ τῆς ἐναντιώσεως τῶν ὀνομάτων κατασκευάσωσι 1(1),232,30; vgl. 1(11),296,17.19; 296,13; 296,22; 1(1),164,3 (= Zitat d. Eun.).

- c) ἄ. die οὐσία, φύσις Gottes: εἰ οὖν ἀσύνθετος κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ᾧ τὸ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου ἔπεστιν ὄνομα ... ἔστιν οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ ἄ. ἡ φύσις 1(1),233,17 (= Zitat d. Eun.); ἀπλοῦς ... ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἀγέννητος λέγεται, διὰ τοῦτο ἄ. ἐστὶν ὁ θεός 1(1),238,12 (= Zitat d. Eun.); ἡ τοσαύτη περὶ τὸ τῆς ἄ. ὄνομα πτόησις, ὥστε ἐκεῖνῳ πᾶσαν ἀνατιθέναι τὴν τῆς θεότητος φύσιν 1(1),217,19; τοῦτο γὰρ εἶναι τὴν θείαν φύσιν, ὅπερ σημαίνει τὸ τῆς ἄ. ὄνομα 1(1),243,21; ἡ ἄ. τὸ κυριώτατον τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ 1(1),244,5; ἄ. ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθινὴ θεότης 1(1),244,13; οἷόν τι παλάμη παιδικῇ τὴν ἀπερινόητον τοῦ θεοῦ φύσιν ταῖς ὀλίγαις συλλαβαῖς τῆς ἄ. ἐναποκλείουσι 1(1),251,1; μονο-νουχὶ φανερώς εἰδωλοποιοῦντες ἑαυτῶν τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ἐν τῷ τὴν ἐμφαι-νομένην τῇ ἄ. διάνοιαν ταύτην θεοποιεῖν 1(1),256,5; προσηγορίᾳ μιᾶ τὴν ἀόριστον φύσιν περιμετροῦσι τῷ ὀνόματι τῆς ἄ. τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ περι-σφίγγοντες 1(1),262,19; βούλεται τὸν τοιόνδε τοῦ ῥήματος ἦχον, τὴν τῆς ἄ. λέγω φωνήν, ἐμφανῶς δεικνύναι τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν 1(1),266,25; vgl. 1(1),244,2; 244,9; 217,14; 237,4; 271,8; 276,8; 276,15; 337,8; 337,17; 337,27; 363,8; 364,16; 366,30; 367,26; 381,10; 381,17; 389,21; 1(11),41,14.

B Gregors Entgegnung:

- a) ἄ. ist nicht οὐσία; der Begriff ἄ. wird κατ' ἐπίνοιαν Gott zugesprochen: ἄλλο τι τῆς ἄ. ἐστὶ τὸ νόημα καὶ ἄλλος τῆς θείας οὐσίας ὁ λόγος 1(1),337,11; ἴδιον δὲ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ λόγος, λόγου δὲ μέρη ῥήματά τε καὶ ὀνόματα, ὄνομα δὲ ἡ ἄ. 1(1),272,25; ἡ δὲ ἄ. ὄνομά ἐστιν ἐμφαντικὸν τοῦ ἰδίου νοήμα-τος 1(1),273,5; τὸ δόγμα τῆς εὐσεβείας κρατύνεται, τὸ μὴ ταῦτόν οἶσθαι εἶναι τῇ οὐσίᾳ τὴν ἄ. τε καὶ τὴν γέννησιν, ἀλλ' ἐπιθεωρεῖσθαι μὲν ταῦτα τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ, ἄλλο δὲ τι παρὰ ταῦτα εἶναι τῷ ἰδίῳ λόγῳ τὸ ὑποκείμε-νον 1(11),248,1; τὸ τῆς ἄ. ὄνομα μὴ τὴν φύσιν ἐνδεῖκνυσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐπινοίας ἐφαρμόζειν τῇ φύσει 1(1),275,19; (so auch Bas.) οὐδαμῶς ἄλλως τὴν προσ-ηγορίαν τῆς ἄ. ἢ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν φησιν ἐπιλέγεσθαι τῷ θεῷ 1(1),230,1; vgl. 1(1),276,11; 318,5; 272,12; 273,5; 235,27; (Eun. dagegen) τὴν ἄ., ἣν ἐξαίρει τῆς ἐπινοίας 1(1),239,13; vgl. 1(1),245,11.
- b) mit ἄ. wird τὸ ἀναρχον (und τὸ ἀνευ αἰτίας) τῆς ζωῆς Gottes bezeich- net: φαμεν ἐπινενοῆσθαι τὸ τῆς ἄ. ὄνομα πρὸς ἔνδειξιν τοῦ ἀνάρχως τὸν θεὸν ὑφεστάναι 1(1),274,6; τὸ τῆς ἄ. ὄνομα ... ἐξ ἐπινοίας ἐφαρμόζειν τῇ φύσει, δι' ἧς τὸ ἀνευ αἰτίας αὐτὸν ὑφεστάναι σημαίνεται 1(1),275,19; vgl. 1(1),359,9; 380,23; 381,7; 389,5.
- c) ἄ. und πατρότης unzertrennlich: ἡ δὲ πατρότης τῆς ἄ. οὐ διατέμνεται 1(1),197,19; (Bas. Meinung) τὸ δυνατόν εἶναι καὶ διὰ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς προσ-ηγορίας τὴν ἄ. σημαίνεσθαι 1(1),199,15.
- d) ἄ. des Vaters schließt γεννητῶς die Ewigkeit des Sohnes ein: τῇ μὲν ἄ. τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ τοῦ μονογενοῦς αἰδιότης γεννητῶς συνεπινοεῖται 1(1),139,3;

- (so auch Bas.) υἱὸς ... γεννητῶς τῇ ἁ. τοῦ πατρὸς συναπτόμενος 1(1),224, 20.
- e) ἁ. und die anderen θεοπρεπῆ ὀνόματα. Betonung des „Zusammenhangs“: πᾶν ὄνομα θεῖον καὶ πᾶν μεγαλοπρεπὲς νόημα καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα καὶ ὑπόληψις ταῖς περὶ θεοῦ ἐννοίαις ἀρμόζουσα συνήρτηται πρὸς τὴν ἐτέραν καὶ ἦνται ... ἡ πατρότης ἡ ἁ. ἡ δύναμις ἡ ἀφθαρσία ἡ ἀγαθότης ... τὰ ἄλλα πάντα 1(1),196,9; vgl. (die θεοπρ. ὀνόμ. bezeichnen keine Entwicklung etwa von d. Art) νῦν μὲν τὴν ἁ. ἔχειν, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ προσλαμβάνειν τὴν δύναμιν, εἴτα τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν 1(1),195,15; vgl. 1(1),194,12; (Bevorzugung der ἁ. vor den anderen θεοπρ. ὀνόμ. durch Eun. wegen der Leugnung d. Gottheit d. Sohnes) πάντων τῶν ὀνομάτων ὑπεριδόντες τῶν εἰς θεοπρεπῆ τινα δοξολογίαν παρὰ τῆς γραφῆς εὐρεθέντων, ὁμοίως ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ λεγομένων, ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς ἁ. ὄνομα τὸ παρ' αὐτῶν τούτων ἐπὶ ἀθετήσει τῆς μεγαλειότητος τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ συμπεπλασμένον 1(1),231,19; vgl. 1(1),244,16.
- f) der negative Charakter des Begriffs ἁ.: ἡ μὲν γέννησις τινος πράγματος ἢ νοήματος θέσιν ἀποσημαίνει, ἡ δὲ ἁ. τὴν τοῦ τεθέντος ... ἀναίρεισιν· ὥστε παντὶ τρόπῳ προεπινοεῖσθαι τοῦ τῆς ἁ. ὀνόματος τὸ τῆς γεννήσεως ὄνομα 1(1),213,17-19; vgl. 1(1),213,11; 367,22; 266,28.
- g) zur Identität von ἁ. und ἀπλότης, – ἀϊδιότης, ἀφθαρσία: βούλονται γάρ, ἐπειδὴ ἀπλὴ ἐστὶν τοῦ πατρὸς ἡ οὐσία, μὴ ἄλλο τι ἢ ἀγεννησίαν αὐτὴν εἶναι νομίζεσθαι, διότι καὶ ἀγέννητος λέγεται 1(1),235,19; vgl. 1(1),234,16; 234,2; 233,17 (= Zitat d. Eun.); (Gregor hierzu) οὐδεμίαν ἀνάγκην ἔχει, ἐπειδὴ ἀπλοῦν ἐστὶ τῇ φύσει τὸ θεῖον, ἀγεννησίαν αὐτοῦ τὴν φύσιν κατονομάζεσθαι· ἀλλὰ καθ' ὃ μὲν ἀμερὴς ἐστὶ καὶ ἀσύνθετος, ἀπλοὺς λέγεται, καθ' ὃ δὲ οὐκ ἐγεννηθῇ, ἀγέννητος 1(1),233,27; ὥπερ ἀπλὴ ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία καὶ οὐχ ἀπλότης, οὕτω καὶ ἀγέννητός ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία καὶ οὐκ ἁ. 1(1),235,12; vgl. 1(1),235,7; 235,29; 236,8; 390,2; (andernfalls betr. ἁ. auch den Sohn, was absurd ist) οὐδεμίαν κατὰ τὸ σημανόμενον κοινωνίαν ἢ ἀπλότης πρὸς τὸ ἀγέννητον ἔξει, ὡς διὰ τὸ ἀσύνθετον ἀγεννησίαν τὴν φύσιν λέγεσθαι, ἵνα μὴ δυοῖν ἀτόποιν τὸ ἕτερον καθ' ἑαυτῶν ἐπισπάσωνται, ἢ ἀρνούμενοι τοῦ μονογενοῦς τὴν θεότητα ἢ κακείνῳ τὴν ἁ. ἐπιφημιζόντες 1(1),234,7-9; vgl. 1(1),368,2-5; 369,20; 369,28; (gleiche Argum. im Zush. mit ἀϊδιότης) 1(1),223,18; (gleiche Argum. im Zush. mit ἀφθαρσία) ἀφθαρτος ὁ υἱὸς εἶναι καὶ παρὰ τούτων οὐκ ἀμφιβάλλεται· ἀγέννητος ἄρα κατὰ τὸν Εὐνομίου λόγον καὶ οὗτός ἐστιν, εἴπερ ταῦτόν σημαίνει τῇ ἁ. τὸ ἄφθαρτον 1(1),390,11.
- h) ἁ. bewirkt διπλὴ οὐσία: τὸν θεὸν ... ἔχειν δὲ παρεπομένην αὐτῷ οὐσίαν ἄλλην, ἣν ἁ. προσαγορεύουσιν 1(1),215,24; διπλὴν οὐσίαν περὶ τὸν θεὸν λέγειν, τὴν μὲν ἐκ τῆς θεότητος, τὴν δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἁ. γνωριζομένην 1(1),216,5; vgl. 1(1),215,15.

- i) ἄ. entlehnt von den Ägyptern: καὶ γὰρ κακέينوι λέγουσι τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα, τῷ ὑπερέχοντι κατὰ τὰς ὑπολήψεις αὐτῶν θεῷ τὴν ἄ. ἐπιφημίζοντες 1(11),305,21.
- j) ἄ. ohne (Schrift-)Bezeugung: οἱ προφῆται ... οἱ μηδαμοῦ κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον τὴν ἄ. θεοποιήσαντες 1(1),386,9; σὺ δὲ εἰς τίνα τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀναφέρειν ἔχεις τὴν τῆς ἄ. φωνὴν καὶ ὅτι αὐτῆς κατηγορεῖται τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς οὐσίας 1(1),317,5.

Das Vokabular des Eunomios im *Lexicon Gregorianum*

Die Arbeit an dem Vokabular des Eunomios im Kontext Gregors soll sich nicht auf die oben behandelten Lemmata beschränken. Im Rahmen des Projektes des *Lexicon Gregorianum*, das in der Forschungsstelle Gregor von Nyssa in Münster erarbeitet wird, werden alle 1128 Lemmata des Eunomios im Hinblick auf den Kontext Gregors geprüft werden. Ähnlich wie in diesem Beitrag werden in dem *Lexicon Gregorianum* bei allen (sowohl in den Zitaten des Eunomios wie auch in den Texten Gregors vorkommenden gleichen) Lemmata deutlich der Gebrauch Gregors von dem des Eunomios abgehoben, und deutlich werden ausgewiesen das direkte Zitat des Eunomios, die Wiederholung des Zitates bei Gregor, Gregors Paraphrasierung und Auseinandersetzung mit den Worten des Eunomios. Vorrangig geht es bei dieser Arbeit um die Beschreibung des objektiven Befundes, und mit äußerster Zurückhaltung wird subjektive Meinung und Deutung einfließen.

Aufbau und Anordnung eines Artikel im *Lexicon Gregorianum* sind kurz zu skizzieren: Nach der Nennung des Lemmas und dem Eingehen auf Besonderheiten der Form, Schreibweise und ähnlichen Formalien – folgt das Ergebnis der Bedeutungsanalyse: die Übersetzung des Lemmas, geprüft an jeder Stelle, an der das Lemma in dieser Bedeutung erscheint. Danach folgen die Perikopen und Stellenangaben.

Was der Benutzer mit dem *Lexicon Gregorianum* in den Händen haben wird, ist kein *Lexique raisonné* nach Art des Kittelschen Theologischen Wörterbuchs zum Neuen Testament, das umfassende von hochqualifizierten Forschern erstellte Abhandlungen über Wortfelder und zusammengehörende Lemmata bietet, – aber auch kein reiner Wortindex, der nur nach Schriften unterteilt die vielen Belegstellen undifferenziert aufeinanderfolgen läßt. Die Differenzierung ist gegeben durch die unterschiedliche Bedeutung, die ein Lemma an den verschiedenen Stellen in Gregors Werk annehmen kann, – und bei bedeutungsgleichen Belegen wie z. B. bei dem Artikel ἀγεννησία (s. o.) durch die Form der Anwendung, wobei die Perikope klar das Bedeutungsspektrum

der ausgewiesenen Übersetzung und den Anwendungsbereich illustrieren soll. Natürlich kann sie nicht dem Benutzer für eine allseitige Absicherung das Nachschlagen der Stelle im Werk abnehmen. Dieses muß er in jedem Fall dann machen, wenn er sich ein Bild von den Stellen machen will, die, weil sie in der Bedeutung und Anwendung der ausgewiesenen Perikope gleich oder ähnlich erscheinen, nur mit Tilde und Gleichheitszeichen als Stelle nach der Perikope angereiht werden. Alle Artikel erstreben Vollständigkeit: alle Stellen, an denen das Lemma erscheint, sollen ausgewiesen werden³⁵.

Dieses Lexikon soll vor der Verlagspublikation in provisorischen Lieferungen eines Computer-Ausdrucks hergestellt und erfahrenen Gregorforschern zugesandt werden, – mit der Bitte, beratend und korrigierend die Arbeit zu unterstützen. Ihre Rückmeldungen werden dann eingehen in das Exemplar der Verlagspublikation. Die 1. Lieferung wird Ende 1988 verschickt werden und die ersten rund 2500 Artikel des *Lexicon Gregorianum* umfassen, das sind in etwa die Artikel von Α–Γ³⁶.

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35 Nur bei Präpositionen, Formwörtern und Massenwörtern wie εἶναι werden beispielhafte Analysen genügen.

36 Insgesamt wurden drei Lieferungen erarbeitet und entsprechend verschickt. Dann setzte Mitte der 90er Jahre auf Drängen vieler Patristiker die Arbeit an der Verlagspublikation ein. Von Anfang an zeigte der Brill-Verlag, Leiden großes Interesse an der Publikation der Bände des *Lexicon Gregorianum*, übernahm auch die schwierigen Layout-Arbeiten bei der Einrichtung des dreispaltigen Textes. Inzwischen liegt das neunbändige Werk abgeschlossen vor. Die Lemmata Gregors und die Lemmata Eunomiana verteilen sich im *Lexicon Gregorianum* wie folgt: Band I (1999) ἀβαρής – ἄωρος, Band II (2000) βαβαί – δωροφορία, Band III (2001) ἔαρ – ἑωσφόρος, Band IV (2002) ζάλη – ἰώτα, Band V (2003) καρχασμός – κωφώ, Band VI (2007) λαβή – ὀψοφόρος, Band VII (2009) παγγενής – πῶμα, Band VIII (2010) ῥάβδος – σῶφρων, Band IX (2013) τάγμα – ὠχρότης.

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L'aspect cosmologique de la philosophie d'Eunome pour la reprise de l'*Hexaemeron* basilien par Grégoire de Nysse*

Michel van Esbroeck

Puissance et énergie, engendrer et créer, sont les deux antinomies dont il sera traité ici. Elles se trouvent au centre de perspective des nombreuses initiatives de Grégoire de Nysse lorsqu'il entend réparer l'effet des attaques d'Eunome contre les œuvres de son frère Basile. Ce dernier n'a jamais argumenté sur la base d'une *theia physis*, sinon au moment de rendre compte des positions eunomiennes elles-mêmes¹. Au contraire, Grégoire de Nysse admet la nature divine, sous réserve de l'accomplissement de la création toute entière dans la personne du Christ comme *kephalaion* de l'Univers. Grégoire se sert en effet de l'unité de la création et de la rédemption pour récupérer au sein de la nouvelle création l'unité qui avait été fragmentée par Eunome, lequel confond l'aspect évolutif du monde avec l'activité hiérarchisée des principes créateurs. Au moment où Basile répond à Eunome, vers 360, la question n'est pas encore impliquée dans la trame de l'exégèse du début de la Genèse, où il est inévitable de prendre parti vis-à-vis des distinctions entre engendrer et créer d'une part, entre *epinoia* et nom d'autre part, et enfin entre énergie et substance. Ce stade de la discussion est celui qui se manifeste dans les traités de Grégoire.

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see M. van Esbroeck, "L'aspect cosmologique de la philosophie d'Eunome pour la reprise de l'*Hexaemeron* basilien par Grégoire de Nysse", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 203–216. For further bibliography related to this topic, see C. Köckert, *Christliche Kosmologie und kaiserzeitliche Philosophie: Die Auslegung des Schöpfungsberichtes bei Origenes, Basilius und Gregor von Nyssa vor dem Hintergrund kaiserzeitlicher Timaeus-Interpretationen*, Tübingen 2009; D.C. DeMarco, "The Presentation and Reception of Basil's *Homiliae in hexaemeron* in Gregory's *In hexaemeron*", *ZAC* 17 (2013) 332–352; O. Sferlea, "L'infinité divine chez Grégoire de Nysse: de l'anthropologie à la polémique trinitaire", *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013) 137–168; X. Batllo, "Une évolution de Grégoire? La distinction *κτισόν/ἄκτιστον* du CE I au CE III", in: J. Leemans – M. Cassin, *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium III. An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies*, Leiden 2014, 489–499; C.S. O'Brien, "Creation, Cosmogony, and Cappadocian Cosmology", in N. Dumitrascu (ed.), *The Ecumenical Legacy of the Cappadocians*, London 2015, 7–17.

1 Basile de Césarée, *Contre Eunome* II 32,18 (SC 305, 134).

Entre les deux moments de la discussion se place l'ouvrage purement pastoral de Basile, l'*Hexaemeron*, qui par sa simplicité et sa candeur a suscité les sarcasmes d'Eunome. C'est à un niveau plus philosophique que Grégoire de Nysse reprend alors toute la discussion déjà engagée par Basile.

En abordant ainsi le problème, nous revenons inévitablement sur la question de l'authenticité basilienne des deux homélies sur la Création de l'Homme². Nous n'avons jamais soutenu que ces homélies aient été éditées en même temps que les neuf autres, ou suivant des principes identiques. Nous avons là seulement des esquisses basiliennes. Notre thèse a toujours été que Grégoire n'a pu écrire son *De hominis opificio* sans avoir devant les yeux les deux homélies déjà préparées par Basile, et que ce sont elles qu'il transpose, face à Eunome. Les réactions à notre position ont été négatives chez J.C.M. van Winden³, E. Gallicet⁴ et E. Amand de Mendieta⁵. Seul ce dernier a eu le courage de déambuler à travers l'apparat critique, lequel indique non seulement les variantes de la version courte, mais tient compte de toutes les variantes des versions moyennes et longue qu'il n'imprime pas séparément. Ce travail sur trente-trois manuscrits, E. Amand de Mendieta l'a confronté dans un article particulier à l'édition de H. Hörner⁶. Les positions de l'auteur y sont beaucoup plus nuancées contre l'attribution à Basile. Mais comme E. Amand de Mendieta n'y prend pas en considération le fait que Grégoire de Nysse a connu les deux homélies, je lui écris à cette époque, et il a eu la bonté de me répondre qu'en fin de compte il admettait que les homélies soient des esquisses de Basile lui-même. Depuis lors, P.J. Fedwick s'est prononcé davantage pour la thèse de l'origine basilienne⁷, et Stig Y. Rudberg, évoquant les deux éditions de 1970

2 Cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 99–126.

3 Cf. J.C.M. van Winden, "Review of *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'origine de l'homme (Hom. x et xi de l'Hexaéméron)*, Paris: Cerf, 1970," *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972) 234–236.

4 E. Gallicet, «Intorno all'attribuzione a Basilio delle due omelie *De Creatione Hominis*», *AAS.T.M* 104 (1975) 319–342.

5 E. Amand de Mendieta, "Review of *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'origine de l'homme (Hom. x et xi de l'Hexaéméron)*, Paris: Cerf, 1970," *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971) 240–242; Id., "Review of *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'origine de l'homme (Hom. x et xi de l'Hexaéméron)*, Paris: Cerf, 1970," in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 66 (1973) 91–95; Id., «Les deux homélies sur la Création de l'Homme que les manuscrits attribuent à Basile de Césarée ou à Grégoire de Nysse», in: *Zetesis. Album amicorum door vrienden en collega's aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. E. de Strycker*, Antwerpen-Utrecht 1973, 695–716.

6 H. Hörner, *Auctorum incertorum vulgo Basilli vel Gregorii Nysseni. Sermones de Creatione Hominis*, GNO Supplementum, Leiden 1972.

7 P.J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, Toronto 1979, 153.

et de 1972, énonce simplement le fait que c'est là « un exemple d'une grande entreprise effectuée simultanément par des spécialistes dans différents pays, ce qui en principe devrait être évité »⁸. En fait, la double édition, diamétralement opposée l'une à l'autre pour le stemma, l'attribution et le choix des leçons, ne fait que prolonger la tradition manuscrite elle-même, partagée dès l'origine entre Basile et Grégoire. Sur l'origine de cette double attribution, il n'y a à ma connaissance guère d'explication dans l'édition des trois homélies incertaines par H. Hörner. En pratique, et non en principe, le fait est là.

Fermions ici cette parenthèse. En abordant le Traité I contre Eunome dans le paragraphe le plus important de l'*Apologia hyper tēs Apologias*, nous restons à un des endroits clefs pour la compréhension du rapport entre les deux ouvrages de Grégoire et de Basile en face d'Eunome. Toutefois, il est extrêmement simpliste de parler de deux ouvrages. Pour comprendre ce qui s'est passé, il est nécessaire d'envisager une succession de près de quatorze livres dont quelques-uns sont définitivement perdus. Nous rappelons ici au préalable cette énumération.

1. L'*Apologie* d'Eunome, écrite vers 360 ou 361, récemment éditée par B. Sesboüé et G.M. de Durand⁹.
2. La réponse de Basile en trois traités *Contre Eunome* vers 366, édités par les mêmes dans les Sources Chrétiennes¹⁰.
3. L'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, publiée par Eunome après un temps plus long que la guerre de Troie, vers 378. A ce texte, Basile n'a pas répondu. Quelques extraits sont cités chez Grégoire.
4. L'*Hexaemeron* de Basile, du genre pastoral et exégétique, vers Pâques 378.
5. Les traités *Contre Eunome* IV et V, arsenal scripturaire et esquisse d'une rédaction à date inconnue. En dépit des fluctuations, Sesboüé et de Durand reviennent à une origine basilienne probable¹¹.
6. Deux livres d'Eunome contre l'*Hexaemeron* de Basile, écrit si polémique qu'Eunome, aux dires de Philostorge, se fit huer par les habitants de Césarée bien des années plus tard. Basile en serait mort¹².

8 Stig Y. Rudberg, « Manuscripts and Editions of the Works of Basil of Caesarea », in P.J. Fedwick, *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, Part II, Toronto 1982, 49.

9 Eunome, *Apologie* (SC 305, 180–299).

10 Basile de Césarée, *CE I* (SC 299) et *CE II–III* (SC 305).

11 Cf. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome*, Tome I, SC 299, Paris 1982, 63–64.

12 Cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 99.

7. Deux homélies sur l'*Origine de l'Homme*, esquissées par Basile comme suite à l'*Hexaemeron*, et éditées dans les Sources Chrétiennes¹³.
8. Le *De hominis opificio* de Grégoire de Nysse est la première réaction. Il transpose les deux homélies, à la demande de son frère Pierre, lequel n'est pas encore évêque de Sébastée¹⁴.
9. Le traité *Contre Eunome* I de Grégoire, lequel prend position face à l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, et continue donc le rôle des livres IV et V *Contre Eunome* de Basile à l'adresse d'Eunome, tout comme le *De hominis opificio* transposait les deux homélies esquissées¹⁵.
10. Le traité *In Hexaemeron* de Grégoire de Nysse, lequel complète de *De hominis opificio* en remontant à la théologie des cinq premiers jours de la création selon la Genèse, et où Grégoire répond une nouvelle fois à la demande de son frère Pierre de Sébastée¹⁶.
11. Le Traité *Contre Eunome* II, écrit après l'*In Hexaemeron* auquel il fait allusion, et où Grégoire polémique sans doute contre les tomes d'Eunome où ce dernier attaquait l'*Hexaemeron* de Basile, mais sans que le texte de ces livres ne soit clairement cité. Les trois derniers livres eunomiens parus après la mort de Basile sont alors déjà entre les mains de Grégoire¹⁷.
12. Le livre III *Contre Eunome*, composé à loisir en x livres, vers 383¹⁸.
13. L'*Ekthesis* d'Eunome, adressée cette fois à Grégoire¹⁹.
14. Le livre IV *Contre Eunome*, bref résumé synthétique de Grégoire²⁰.

En observant cette suite d'œuvres, on voit que sans arrêt Grégoire de Nysse transpose des œuvres antérieures au vu d'adversaires à réfuter. Si on prend un peu de recul par rapport aux années 380, on verra aisément que ce n'est pas là une caractéristique isolée. On peut citer au moins quatre cas différents où le même génie de la reprise est à l'œuvre. Tout jeune encore, Grégoire composa une fausse lettre au nom de leur oncle commun afin de faire plaisir à son grand frère Basile, et ce dernier se vit obligé de ramener son jeune frère à un zèle plus honnête²¹. Plus tard Grégoire de Nysse, qui avait toujours été

13 Basile de Césarée, *Sur l'Origine de l'Homme* (SC 160, 166–279).

14 Grégoire de Nysse, *Op hom* (PG 44, 123–256).

15 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* I (GNO I, 22–225).

16 Grégoire de Nysse, *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 1–83).

17 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* II (GNO I, 226–409).

18 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* III (GNO II, 3–31).

19 Voir le titre dans Grégoire de Nysse, *Ref Eun* (GNO II, 312).

20 Grégoire de Nysse, *Ref Eun* (GNO II, 312–410).

21 G. May, «Gregor von Nyssa in der Kirchenpolitik seiner Zeit», *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 15 (1966) 106–107.

plus enclin que son frère à récupérer les Marcelliens dans l'orthodoxie, trouvera dans le concile d'Antioche une justification de sa politique antérieure, qui n'avait pas l'approbation de Basile²². Dans les mêmes années 80 où Grégoire se vit contraint de prolonger l'œuvre de Basile interrompue par la mort, on peut admirer la manière dont l'évêque de Nysse contourne Atarbios de Néocésarée en mettant dans la bouche de Grégoire le Thaumaturge un Credo où les orientations marcelliennes sont ménagées grâce à l'exclusion du mot fatidique d'hypostase dans la Trinité²³. La même habileté subtile et presque politicienne se joue dans la reprise de l'héritage spirituel et politique de son frère Basile, et le parachèvement de ses esquisses anti-eunomiennes. A une date moins facile à déterminer, on observe une souplesse tout aussi remarquable dans la transposition de la grande lettre de Macaire dans le Traité de la véritable ascèse, le *De Instituto Christiano*, où Grégoire n'hésite pas à reprendre et à remanier l'écrit messalien qui lui sert de modèle²⁴. Dans toutes ces nombreuses circonstances, on observe un même tempérament, prompt à recoudre des situations vécues grâce à la vélocité de la pensée et à l'agilité de l'argumentation.

Ce tableau plus vaste de l'horizon où s'inscrit la réaction de Grégoire à l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* contribuera, nous le croyons, à rendre mieux perceptible le terrain plus philosophique et théologique où nous nous engageons à présent.

On nous permettra de prendre pour base de départ la manière dont nous avons traduit, il y a presque vingt ans, le paragraphe eunomien cité par Grégoire *CE* I 151–153 :

Toute la raison de nos croyances est réalisée à partir de l'essence la plus haute et la plus souveraine, ensuite à partir de celle qui, pat elle et après elle, est en tête de toutes les autres, enfin à partir de la troisième qui n'est aucunement sur le même pied que celles-ci, mais est soumise à la première par la *cause* et à la seconde par l'*énergie* selon laquelle elle procède, en y comprenant évidemment, pour la réalisation totale de notre argument, aussi bien les énergies qui accompagnent les essences que les noms qui leur sont innés. Et chacune des ces substances étant première, simple et parfaitement une, et pensée selon sa dignité propre, les énergies étant décrites par les œuvres et les œuvres étant mesurées par les

22 Ibid., 108.

23 L. Abramowski, « Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgus bei Gregor von Nyssa und des Problem seiner Echtheit », *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 87 (1976) 156 et 160.

24 R. Staats, *Makarios-Symeon. Epistola Magna. Eine messialianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregor von Nyssa De instituto christiano*, Göttingen 1984.

énergies des ouvriers, il est donc tout à fait nécessaire que les énergies qui suivent chacune des essences soient plus petites ou plus grandes, les unes à la première place, les autres à la seconde, en un mot leur différence est proportionnelle à leurs œuvres, puisqu'il n'est pas permis de tenir pour une même énergie celle selon laquelle il créa les anges ou les astres ou le ciel ou les hommes; mais celui qui réfléchit sainement estimera que le degré d'ancienneté et de dignité est proportionnel à celui de l'énergie, vu que les mêmes énergies parachèvent des œuvres identiques, et les œuvres modifiées reflètent des œuvres modifiées²⁵.

Que l'on compare avec le paragraphe équivalent dans l'ancienne *Apologie* une dizaine d'années plus tôt, au chapitre 25:

Il n'y a pas de second en nombre à côté du Père et qui soit inengendré – car il y a un seul et unique inengendré 'de qui tout est venu' – ou d'autre à côté du Fils et qui soit un rejeton – car il y a un seul et unique Monogène notre Seigneur par qui tout existe selon l'Apôtre; mais il y a un troisième en nature et en ordre, fait sur le commandement du Père et par l'activité du Fils. Il est honoré en troisième lieu comme la première créature du Monogène, la plus grande de toutes et la seule qui soit telle. La divinité et la puissance démiurgique lui font défaut, mais il est rempli de la puissance de sanctification et d'enseignement. Car réfuter dès maintenant ceux qui croient que le Paraclet est une certaine activité de Dieu et qui ensuite le subnumèrent aux substances, gens trop naïfs et bien éloignés de la vérité, demanderait beaucoup de loisir²⁶.

La différence entre ces deux paragraphes nous paraît avant tout la position de l'Esprit, dont l'énergie ou l'activité est plus sensible en 378 qu'en 361. Dans le texte le plus récent, le rapport au récit de la Création dans la Genèse est beaucoup plus évident. Comme c'est là l'objet de notre étude, nous commencerons donc par la fin de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, là où la hiérarchie des énergies est spécifiée par la nature des choses créées: les anges, les astres, le ciel et l'homme. On observera tout d'abord que ces quatre entités dépendent du Père – ou plus exactement de l'innommable ou inengendré –, par le nom qui les cause dans le récit même de la *Genèse*: le syntagme « Que soit x! Et x fut » touche la lumière

25 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* I 151–153 (GNO I, 71–73); cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 104–105.

26 Eunome, *Apologie* 25 (SC 305, 287).

en 1,3 (en tant que créée il s'agit des anges ou serviteurs de flammes), le firmament ou le ciel en 1,6, et les luminaires en 1,14; quant à l'Homme en 1,26, il y a délibération et pluriel indiquant l'activité de l'Esprit selon la formule de l'ancienne *Apologie*, en troisième lieu. En effet, le jour unique de la lumière ne connumère pas avec le deuxième, le quatrième et le sixième selon l'ordre explicite du texte scripturaire. Le récit de la Création est donc compris par Eunome de manière ultra-littéraliste. Les choses dépendent par l'énergie du Monogène grâce au nom qui leur est inné par la Parole de l'Inengendré. Mais le jour unique contient plus. Lorsque le Père dit le Fils comme lumière incréée, cette parole n'est pas un nom mais une *epinoia*. Le « *yehî ôr* » qui constitue le fils comme engendré est le « *memrà* », nom verbal ou instrument du « *vayyomer* : que soit ! », ou le Verbe. Les noms servent à désigner la substance des choses qui existent, l'existence du Fils comme engendré échappant à cette définition du nom inné dans la mesure où il est créateur. En tant qu'*epinoia* distinguant les personnes divines, le Père ne peut pas recevoir le nom de Père, car en tant qu'il est inengendré, il n'a pas de nom adéquat. Eunome dit en effet que les intentions (*epinoiai*) ne peuvent précéder ce dont elles sont les intentions²⁷. Autrement dit, le nom du Fils a bien été dit par le Père, dans le *Psaume 2* et dans l'évangile, qui le cite au baptême et à la transfiguration, mais le nom du Père n'a été ajouté que par les hommes sous l'influence de l'esprit. Il n'est pas un vrai nom, et c'est pourquoi l'inengendré ressemble à l'Un de Plotin, dont il serait déjà trop de dire qu'il ait une *ousia*. En tant que tel, il dépasse infiniment le Fils dont la limitation engendrée est irréversiblement liée à ce degré inférieur.

Mais la place de l'Esprit était différente dans la première *Apologie*. En 361, l'Esprit est soumis à la cause par le Père et à l'énergie par le Fils. C'est que la relation n'est à ce moment envisagée qu'à l'intérieur de la Trinité, et non vis-à-vis de la Création des six jours. Au contraire, dans l'*Apologie pour l'Apologie*, tout est créé dans le Fils, le *memrà* créateur qui dit les choses par un ordre ou un commandement donné par le Père, mais l'énergie propre des créatures dépend de l'Esprit. Entre essence et œuvre douée d'énergie, il y a un palier créateur procuré par l'Esprit, lequel confère l'énergie proportionnelle à l'ordre et à la dignité de la chose créée. Par là la nature créée devient totalement solidaire de la divinité, et d'un monisme agnostique initial, Eunome passe à un panthéisme naturaliste.

27 Cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 106; Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* II 171 (GNO I, 274).

Que l'*epinoia* soit différente des *onomazomena*, on le constatera par ricochet en considérant les divers Traités plus ou moins apocryphes autour d'Atarbios de Néocésarée. La thèse principale est certainement là formule trinitaire « une hypostase, trois *epinoiai* » qui a été utilisée par le sabellianisme latent d'Atarbios à l'intérieur de sa formule propre du Credo de Grégoire le Thaumaturge²⁸. Eunome ne devait pas utiliser, en chirurgie intra-trinitaire, d'une autre catégorie, du dans les années 70. Il s'ensuit cependant que, dans le dire du Fils, *epinoia* et *onoma* coïncident, le premier ne touche que les principes dont la triple subordination constitue la trinité pour Eunome, le second correspond à la chose effectivement créée. C'est sous ce rapport que nous envisageons maintenant comment Eunome conçoit l'ouvrage des six jours.

Déjà dans le fameux paragraphe d'Eunome transmis par Grégoire, on a vu la succession – anges, ciel, astres, hommes – jouer son rôle dans l'appréciation des subordinations dans la Trinité. Entendons-le préciser l'*Hexaemeron* dans CE I 347:

Nous disons que l'homme a été créé en cinquième lieu après le ciel à partir de l'écriture de Moïse, ayant harmonisé à ce dire-ce qui a été tu avant le chiffre de ces jours quand il n'y avait pas de ciel. Ainsi ce qui vient après, fait la limite d'après sa propre distance, et l'hypostase de ce qui a été intelligé auparavant²⁹.

On voit à l'évidence que la lumière du jour ne connumère pas avec les autres, et c'est donc avec le firmament que commence la véritable création, de laquelle sort l'homme par succession régulière le cinquième jour. La distance que se crée chacun des commandements créateurs dits dans un nom offre un espace où s'insèrent les jours impairs pour Eunome, lesquels sont remplis par les plantes et les animaux (troisième et cinquième jour selon la Bible, et quatrième selon Eunome) sans qu'un nom spécifique ne soit proféré. La thèse eunomienne se retrouve dans CE I 327–328:

28 Nous ne pouvons détailler ici les raisons de notre affirmation : la formulation appartient à ce qui, d'après la version syriaque et géorgienne de la Vie du Thaumaturge, apparut sur la muraille de l'Eglise de Néocésarée fondée par le Thaumaturge. L'origine grecque de cette légende rendue incontestable grâce à la version géorgienne encore inédite, que nous avons transcrite il y a une vingtaine d'années. Cette légende a été mise en circulation par Atarbios. C'est la seule manière de comprendre comment Basile ne se réfère à la légende du Thaumaturge qu'en 375.

29 Grégoire de Nysse, CE I 347 (GNO I, 129,19–26).

L'aspect coordonné des intellections et la séquence de la création qui les concernent, ni moi ni sans doute lui-même, le père de blasphème, ne le saisit facilement. S'il a déduit cela de l'ordre de la création, à savoir que le ciel est l'ouvrage d'une énergie supérieure, et que l'achèvement de l'énergie qui suit celle du ciel est l'astre, et que du premier vient l'ange et de celui-ci l'homme, son discours aurait l'excuse d'élaborer le dogme grâce à l'apposition des semblables³⁰.

Grégoire se livre ici à une ironie peut-être un peu facile. Il est manifeste qu'Eunome n'entend pas faire participer les jours pour lui impairs de la même manière que les jour pairs, qui remplissent l'eau d'abord avec les plantes, puis le sec avec les animaux. Dans un autre passage Eunome disait, selon *CE* I 370 : « Le démiurge de tout, se projetant les siècles et le lieu qu'ils occupent comme une *chôra* prête à recevoir ce qui devient, crée en elle toutes choses »³¹. Nous voyons que l'homme est créé dans le réceptacle impair du sublunaire à partir des astres ; tout comme les anges le sont dans le subcéleste à partir de la lumière du jour unique. Le rythme créateur est donc triple : le Père engendre et crée le Fils dans la lumière primordiale, puis le Fils crée le premier jour le firmament ou l'espace des anges qui lui sont inférieurs, puis les luminaires le deuxième jour, les astres pouvant déjà subir grâce aux anges déchus le mouvement égarant des planètes « égarées ». Enfin le cinquième jour il crée l'homme, en collaboration avec l'Esprit à cause du pluriel « Faisons » de *Genèse* 1,26. Cette hiérarchie des créatures est en réalité moins susceptible de caricature que ne le fait Grégoire dans le paragraphe cité. Les plantes et les animaux aériens et aquatiques dessinent plutôt la distance entre les actes créateurs réduits à trois d'après l'ordre des dignités, dans les cas où l'Écriture dit explicitement un ordre, un commandement par un nom, comme lorsqu'il s'agit de la lumière primordiale du Fils. Le rôle de créateur est en quelque sorte délégué aux anges pour le deuxième et quatrième jours eunomiens, d'où la tératologie possible dans les planètes et dans le sublunaire voué aux vexations des anges mauvais.

Il est temps de voir maintenant comment cette intrication de la création des êtres avec l'ordre des jours constitue la base d'une attaque possible de l'*Hexaemeron* de Basile. Ce dernier, en écartant l'interprétation gnostique d'un ciel purement se ménager en fait un gage de la réalité de la résurrection au ciel. Il nie donc l'identité du ciel de *Genèse* 1,1 et de *Genèse* 1,6, le firmament que nous voyons, auquel il ne refuse d'ailleurs pas de donner le nom de second

30 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* I 328 (GNO I, 124,8–11).

31 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* I 370 (GNO I, 136,9–12).

ciel, voire de ciel³². Cette admission d'un réalisme scripturaire intégral indépendamment de ce qui est phénoménal introduit une rupture incontrôlable dans l'unité de la nature. C'est là qu'Eunome pouvait railler une présentation trop naïve, et c'est là également que Grégoire intervient, comme il le dit très explicitement au début de l'*In Hexaemeron* : il entend « Ne rien transposer en une allégorie morale dans la lettre de l'Écriture, mais ne rien laisser sans examen parmi les objections qui nous sont faites », et un peu plus loin, il dira qu'il faut « Maintenir la lettre de l'Écriture et en même temps faire correspondre la théorie physique à la lettre »³³.

Si Grégoire n'admet pas l'ordre et l'enchaînement à l'intérieur de la Trinité, il va totalement les concéder à Eunome au moment de traiter de la création, à une exception près : là où les anges mauvais perturbent cet ordre, dans les phénomènes météorologiques ou dans les phénomènes physiologiques des songes et des cauchemars, lieux où, écrit-il « l'homme a des fantasmes, poussé par autre chose que l'ordre à la fréquentation de ce qui apparaît, égaré par des illusions fermentées et désordonnées »³⁴. Il compare en effet les infirmités de la digestion à l'orage dans le sublunaire, lieu de la dispersion de l'ordre des éléments. L'ordre et l'enchaînement ont à être maintenus à l'intérieur de l'âme par le juste fonctionnement de l'*hégemonikon*. Toutes ces conceptions se retrouvent dans la philosophie grecque du mouvement circulaire parfait, imitation du moteur non mû : « *to kinoûn akinêton* »³⁵.

De cette transposition de l'univers de l'*Hexaemeron* basilien, la reprise des deux homélies sur l'Origine de l'Homme par le *De hominis opificio* constitue un lieu privilégié d'observation. Jadis la place nous a manqué pour en dresser un inventaire plus complet. Le plan des deux esquisses basiliennes suit rigoureusement l'Écriture dans l'ordre, de 1,26 à 2,7. Le discours y est destiné à un public non philosophique. L'argument de l'autorité même de l'Écriture y est donc péremptoire. Grégoire avait à redresser la perfidie par laquelle Eunome raillait un ouvrage pastoral en s'adressant à des spécialistes. A première vue,

32 E. Gallicet, « Intorno all'attribuzione a Basilio delle due omelie *De Creatione Hominis* », 322, a soutenu que l'usage de « ciel » pour le firmament dans l'homélie 2,2 (cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 128) suffisait à disqualifier l'appartenance basilienne, au vu de l'homélie III, 3–4 de l'*Hexaemeron*. Nous ne pensons pas que l'expression « second ciel » déjà employé là contredise l'usage dans l'homélie 2,2.

33 Cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 116 ; Grégoire de Nysse, *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 83–84).

34 Grégoire de Nysse, *Op hom* (PG 44, 168D10).

35 Aristote, *Métaphysique* III 8 (Bekker 1012b24).

le *De hominis opificio* ne suit pas l'ordre de l'Écriture, mais toutes les transformations peuvent être saisies au vu des deux homélies face au paragraphe déjà commenté de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* eunomienne. Nous observerons ces transpositions dans une série de thèmes : a) la Trinité dans le *Faciamus*, b) la croissance jusqu'à la stature parfaite, c) la multiplication des êtres humains, d) la position droite et la main, e) l'eschatologie comprenant la résurrection des corps, f) le rôle des anges dans la création.

- a) Le *faciamus* du verset 1,26 désigne la Trinité, nous dit Basile, et constitue une différence dans le mode de la création. Il n'a pas donné de commandement (*vayyomer wayehî*: il dit et ce fut) puisqu'une délibération précède la création de l'homme, et que la réalisation se fait même en incluant « homme et femme », la distinction des sexes. Basile le récupère grâce à l'âme qui possède en puissance ce qui dépend du choix délibéré : « cela nous le possédons (*enyparxei*) en puissance, qui touche au choix délibéré ; mais par l'énergie nous nous conduisons nous-mêmes »³⁶. Cette position justifie l'être à l'image chez la femme aussi. Mais plus tard on verra que cette *hyparxis* touche l'âme à l'exclusion du corps, ce qui exigera les développements supplémentaires de Grégoire sur la résurrection dans le *De hominis opificio*, chapitres 21 à 27. Or, l'énergie revendiquée par Basile comme propre à l'âme correspond exactement à l'énergie d'Eunome, où l'esprit agit dans les intelligences des hommes et en instruit le comportement. Mais chez Eunome, la place subordonnée de l'Esprit ne permet pas d'intégrer l'*hyparxis*, et donc dans l'homme la résurrection des corps dans l'eschatologie, tout comme en protologie le premier ciel ne correspond pas à l'expérience physique. La trinité du *faciamus* eunomien est étagée à l'image de l'homme lui-même, sans principe unificateur. L'énergie telle que la concevait Basile sert les intérêts d'Eunome pour appliquer l'agir de l'esprit sans préserver la transcendance de la liberté, l'*hégemonikon* propre à l'homme, sur lequel Grégoire insiste dans le chapitre 12 du *De hominis opificio*.
- b) La croissance jusqu'au terme préétabli offre un autre exemple de l'interférence avec le système d'Eunome. Quel est le terme voulu de la croissance d'un individu – on dirait aujourd'hui la réalisation d'un programme génétique d'une espèce donnée ? – Il vient de l'énergie propre, instruction de l'esprit selon le schème eunomien, voire activité d'un ange dans le cas des formes végétales ou animales. Mais Basile insiste sur la

36 Basile de Césarée, *Sur l'Origine de l'Homme* 116,5 (SC 160, 206).

qualité particulière de la création physique de l'homme: il n'en a pas laissé l'ouvrage à un ange, il l'a façonné lui-même³⁷. La première création a eu lieu *en kephalaiô*, la seconde donne le mode de la création (*tropon*). Cette distinction est parfaitement de mise dans la création de l'homme, même si elle avait été exclue par Basile au moment de distinguer le premier ciel du second³⁸. Dans le premier cas il s'agissait de préserver la réalité de l'au-delà, ici il s'agit de préciser le mode physiologique face à la création animale et végétale dont l'homme se distingue tout en y étant immergé. Corollaire moral de la croissance, le commandement de l'homme sur les bêtes sauvages est appliqué de manière extrinsèque aux éléments internes indomptés que l'homme découvre en lui-même selon 1,19³⁹. A nouveau le caractère purement exemplatif de l'image paradisiaque a dû prêter le flanc aux railleries d'Eunome, dont les prétentions scientifiques ne pouvaient se satisfaire d'une image d'Epinal. Quant à Grégoire, il transpose en traitant de la physiologie des cauchemars et des phantasmes de loup-garou au chapitre 13, ayant inclus fortement l'âme à l'intérieur du corps en sorte que toute imagerie devient inutile.

- c) Le « multipliez » biblique s'adresse chez Basile directement à la multiplication physiologique de l'homme. Pour Eunome, celle-ci est directement assurée par l'énergie de l'esprit à l'œuvre dans le monde. Grégoire, lui, va inclure le « multipliez » biblique dans la dimension essentiellement spirituelle, au niveau de la réalisation dans le Christ d'une naissance entièrement spirituelle à travers la résurrection. La distinction des sexes n'y intervient pas, mais il est possible à l'être humain de participer au poids de la nature animale inférieure à laquelle l'homme peut céder. Par conséquent aussi, comme l'avait déjà fortement souligné H. Merki⁴⁰, dans le *noûs* même de l'homme réside la totalité de l'image et de la ressemblance, mais l'homme peut en déchoir par infidélité à sa nature profonde créée et recrée dans le Christ.
- d) La position droite et la physiologie de la main n'est traitée par Basile qu'à la fin de l'homélie 2, chapitre 15, alors que, chez Grégoire, elle inter-

37 Basile de Césarée, *Sur l'Origine de l'Homme* II 2,23 (SC 160, 230).

38 C'est le deuxième argument de E. Gallicet, « Intorno all'attribuzione a Basilio delle due omelie *De Creatione Hominis* », 323–325, qui compare avec *Hexaemeron* I 6,17a. Ici encore, la distinction entre la création en et la forme de cette création, ne tombe pas comme dans l'*Hexaemeron* entre les deux cieux.

39 Basile de Césarée, *Sur l'Origine de l'Homme* I 19 (SC 160, 216–220).

40 Cf. A. Smets – M. van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'Origine de l'Homme*, SC 160, Paris 1970, 24–25.

vient au chapitre 8 des 30 divisions du *De hominis opificio*. Basile, lié par l'Écriture, en fait le lieu privilégié de la de *Genèse* 2,7. Au contraire, Grégoire le lie dès le début à la subordination des trois âmes, noétique, animale et végétative : c'est que l'hylémorphisme aristotélicien est d'emblée la clef interprétative de la pensée de Grégoire. C'est directement que se forme la stature complète de l'homme. Mais Eunome pouvait arguer de la multiplicité charnelle dans « l'être à l'image » proposé par Basile, et par conséquent aboutir au millénarisme, réalisation eschatologique terrestre de l'ouvrage de la trinité, compromise et engagée dans l'évolution terrestre. Grégoire peut répondre que, la multiplication étant spirituelle d'abord, elle ne rencontre qu'accidentellement la nécessité d'une union charnelle, dans la subordination des trois âmes au *basilikon* plutôt qu'à l'*archikon* de Basile. A nouveau le Paradis imagé de Basile, où l'on voit les protoplastes se nourrir de végétaux seulement, où les animaux ne s'entredévorent pas encore, et où selon le mot d'Isaïe l'enfant peut encore mettre la main sur le trou de la vipère⁴¹, ce paradis idéal et exemplaire est complètement intériorisé chez Grégoire. L'image idyllique devient le *basilikon*, le règne de l'homme sur la nature extérieure, non pas sous la forme d'extension matérielle – on dirait aujourd'hui la conquête de l'espace ou la production de puces informatiques –, mais par le règne intérieur sur les mouvements de l'âme qui le lie à l'ici-bas. En face du texte de Basile, Eunome pouvait ironiser à loisir. Qui peut être assez naïf pour croire qu'il y ait eu quelque part un paradis où les animaux sauvages n'étaient pas agressifs : contes populaires qui ne peuvent satisfaire à une intelligence rationnelle de l'Écriture !

- e) Le passage par le septième jour est chose obligée chez Basile. tout simplement à cause du repos de Dieu le septième jour selon l'ordre des versets de l'Écriture, qui n'a pas à se justifier. Les images y sont symboliques du jugement de Dieu, les châtiments de Caïn et de Lamech, l'ordre à Pierre du pardon soixante-mx-sept fois sept fois, tout y parle du jugement final⁴². Mais ces images n'ont pas de prise sur Eunome : le monde s'y développe selon les subordinations de la Trinité elle-même dans un panthéisme rigoureux où l'Inengendré devient synonyme de la nature elle-même et où le millénarisme terrestre devient l'espoir logique, au moins pour les derniers habitants, les privilégiés de la dernière heure. Du fait que la résurrection s'appuie sur le septénaire typologique du jugement dernier,

41 Basile de Césarée, *Sur l'Origine de l'Homme* II 6 (SC 160, 238–242).

42 Basile de Césarée, *Sur l'Origine de l'Homme* II 9–10 (SC 160, 248–256).

elle ne touche en définitive que l'âme et ne traite pas de la résurrection des corps proprement dite. Eunome pouvait à nouveau ironiser sur l'acceptation de la typologie du septénaire scripturaire, reçu de manière extrinsèque par rapport à la nécessité logique. C'est le titre même du chapitre 21 du *De hominis officio* qui lui répond : Que la résurrection est espérée non pas tant à partir de la proclamation de l'Écriture qu'à partir de la nécessité elle-même de la suite normale des choses. Jusqu'au chapitre 27, Grégoire traite de cet aspect où Basile laisse le problème en l'air face à Eunome.

- f) Le rôle des anges et des astres dans la création se manifeste dans un passage très curieux du *CE* II 433, où apparaît ce que pouvait devenir aux yeux d'Eunome le septénaire de la semaine elle-même. Voici ce passage :

« Le raisonnement progressant n'en arriverait-il pas à quelque chose d'étrange et d'indigne de la perception de Dieu s'il (Eunome) disait que les noms établis par Dieu pour les astres sont ceux qui ont cours dans nos usages. Si quelqu'un donnait ceux-ci comme ayant été appelés par Dieu, il serait tout à fait nécessaire d'estimer que l'appellation attribuée aux astres, même celle des idoles grecques, en viendrait également, et de considérer pour véridique tout ce que l'histoire de la mythologie a assigné aux noms des astres, en tant que venant de Dieu qui a veillé à leur donner ces vocables. Ainsi le septénaire de ceux qui enveloppent la voûte polaire est réparti entre les idoles grecques. Ceci affranchirait de tout reproche ceux qui se laissent égarer par eux si on admettait qu'il s'agit là d'un arrangement de Dieu. Ainsi le mythe d'Orion et du Scorpion porteraient à la foi, et les récits sur Argo, et le Cygne, et l'Aigle, et le Chien et la mythologie de la couronne d'Ariadnè, et les noms inventés selon les apparences pour l'ordonnance du zodiaque. De tout cela il (Eunome) considérera qu'il faut en estimer Dieu comme auteur, bien qu'il dise justement que David dit que Dieu leur a attribué ces noms (cf. *Ps* 146,4) »⁴³.

Que l'on se tourne vers la théorie des noms chez Eunome, et en particulier dans le supralunaire, le nom s'oppose à l'*epinoia* comme le résultat concret de l'activité de chacune des essences premières. Les anges et les astres ont une dignité antérieure au ciel sublunaire et aux hommes. Et comme les noms

43 Grégoire de Nysse, *CE* II 432–433 (GNO I, 352,28–353,17).

sont inclus dans la dépendance par la cause et l'énergie de deux premières essences, Grégoire de Nysse se livre à un jeu cinglant sur le nom des astres. Il est évident qu'Eunome n'a pas voulu dire cela, car les noms innés ne sont pas ceux qui sont proférés par les hommes, mais l'essence même de la chose à exister par l'énergie de la seconde et de la troisième essence suprême. Mais le plus intéressant, c'est l'application au septénaire de la semaine : Basile n'a bâti son septénaire symbolique du jugement que par le truchement de la typologie traditionnelle de l'Écriture. On voit qu'Eunome, par son en cinq jours, rendait la présentation basilienne ridicule. Grégoire répond en forçant les conséquences de l'épistémologie eunomienne. Il ne faudrait cependant pas exclure un syncrétisme possible entre le système eunomien et le néopaganisme de Julien l'Apostat. Le septénaire de la semaine, profondément installé dans les mœurs, rendait sans doute aux yeux d'Eunome l'utilisation symbolique de l'Écriture par Basile inopérante. Grégoire lui renvoie la balle exactement à la hauteur où Eunome l'avait reprise à Basile.

Compte tenu de toutes ces transpositions, on peut apprécier de quelle manière les plans des deux homélies d'une part, et du *De hominis opificio* de l'autre, ne peuvent pas coïncider dans les détails. Les questions posées suivent en réalité le schème des homélies, mais avec de gros excursus nécessités par l'adaptation. L'hylémorphisme est la solution grégorienne qui bouleverse l'exposé de Basile. Le verset 1,26 de la *Genèse* est cité au début du chapitre 3 du *De hominis opificio*, et la ressemblance divine par le *Basilikon* est traité au chapitre 5. Quant au verset 2,7, il n'intervient qu'au chapitre 28, après le très long excursus eschatologique sur la résurrection des morts, de 21 à 27. Ce chapitre commence d'ailleurs par un passage sur la préexistence des âmes d'après le *De principiis* d'Origène, explicitement nommé. Or on voit que le réalisme du ciel premier chez Basile pouvait favoriser cette conception de l'âme préexistante dans l'au-delà avant sa descente sous le firmament. Ce n'est qu'alors que Grégoire, s'appuyant sur la *plasis*, le façonnement de l'homme, s'engage dans une analyse quasiment médicale et physiologique de l'organisme humain. Pourquoi le fait-il, alors que sur la morphologie de la main, il a déjà consacré un passage au chapitre 8, là où il définit la hiérarchie des trois âmes ? Il n'y a, une fois le corps déjà envisagé dans sa relation à l'âme noétique qui l'habite, apparemment plus de raison de revenir sur les propriétés physiologiques du corps. Grégoire le fait pourtant, revenant sur l'*hyparxis* de l'âme à l'intérieur de l'organisme au chapitre 29, pour aboutir finalement au dernier chapitre à une analyse exclusivement biologique, sur l'encéphale, le cœur et le foie, l'équilibre osmotique et le réglage de la température, sur le rôle des poumons pour la respiration, et ainsi de suite. Arrivé au bout de cette analyse quasi technique de ce qui va disparaître dans la tombe, il achève brusquement par

l'étonnante phrase : « Mais revenons tous à cette grâce divine en laquelle Dieu a créé l'homme dès le début en ayant dit : Faisons l'homme à notre image et à notre ressemblance ! »⁴⁴. On ne sait ce qui est ici plus paradoxal : de terminer par une section strictement physiologique, ou de conclure par une référence à *Genèse* 1,26, sans plus. Les deux homélies basiliennes rendent la chose tout à fait compréhensible. Le développement physiologique correspond, par sa position dans le traité, à l'homélie 2,16 sur la morphologie de l'œil et du sourcil. Même à ce niveau Grégoire a eu le souci de dépeindre le détail de la *plasis* divine, mais dans un registre moins statique que ne l'était la description de la vue, en analysant le mouvement des organes sur lesquels l'*hégemonikon* doit exercer ses prérogatives de *basileus*. Quant à la référence finale au thème précis des homélies basiliennes, elle ne peut s'expliquer toute seule. Elle peut être un rappel de l'objectif premier de l'ensemble du *De hominis opificio*. Mais plus probablement, le *De hominis opificio* était destiné à précéder les deux homélies esquissées par Basile, et c'est d'ailleurs la raison la plus probable de l'attribution à Grégoire de Nysse dans plus d'un manuscrit. Si les homélies étaient perdues, on chercherait en vain pourquoi un Traité comme le *De hominis opificio* se termine d'une manière si étrange. Si le *De hominis opificio* a connu les homélies, comme nous l'avons toujours soutenu, il devient invraisemblable d'attribuer à un « faussaire » les deux homélies écrites entre 378 et 380. Certes ce n'est là qu'un des aspects de la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse dans le *Contre Eunome* 1. Nous espérons toutefois que cette brève démonstration peut contribuer à faire comprendre aussi bien Eunome que Grégoire lui-même, si porté à remanier opportunément tout ce qui touchait à la réputation d'un frère qu'il a manifestement aimé et vénéré plus que Basile ne le lui demandait.

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Theurgic Neo-Platonism and the Eunomius-Gregory Debate: An Examination of the Background*

Paulos Mar Gregorios

The debate between Eunomius, the Arian (Anomoian) bishop of Cyzicus († circa 395) and Gregory, orthodox bishop of Nyssa (circa 330 to circa 395) has a great deal of contemporary relevance. On the one hand, the question of Christ's full divinity, which Eunomius rejected and Gregory acknowledged, is still the central point in much contemporary Christological debate. On the other hand, the intellectual projects of Eunomius and Gregory raise basic methodological issues to be faced in contemporary attempts to indigenize Christianity and to make it relevant to Secular or "outside" philosophy. Both points will become clearer in the body of this paper.

Two basic interpretative points need to be clarified from the outset—the meaning of the term "philosophia" in hellenistic and Christian thought, and the basic assumption of the "technologia" of sophistical rhetoric used by both Gregory and Eunomius. "Philosophia", literally, befriending wisdom, meant something quite different to the ancients from what it means in the context of the modern university. Philosophy was no intellectual pursuit, but the search of love (*eros*) for wisdom or the higher good. It meant primarily a way of life in which one renounces lesser loves like wealth, power and glory, and disciplines oneself to seek that which is unqualifiedly good and true. This is usually done

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see P.M. Gregorios, "Theurgic neo-Platonism and the Eunomius-Gregory Debate: an Examination of the Background," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium 1" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 217–235. For further bibliography related to this topic, see D.T. Runia, "Festugière Revisited: Aristotle in the Greek Patres," *VigChr* 43 (1989) 1–34; M.R. Barnes, "Eunomius of Cyzicus and Gregory of Nyssa: Two Traditions of Transcendent Causality," *VigChr* 52 (1998) 59–87; Id., *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington D.C. 2001; J. Zachhuber, *Human nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, Leiden 1999; I. Ramelli, "Origen, Patristic Philosophy and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism," *VigChr* 63 (2009) 217–263; Id., "The Divine as Inaccessible Object of Knowledge in Ancient Platonism: A Common Philosophical Pattern across Religious Traditions," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75 (2014) 167–188; M.J. Edwards, *Image, Word and God in the Early Christian Centuries*, London 2013.

in the communion of a small group of disciples led by a teacher or a guru who has already advanced enough in this disciplined way of life to be able to lead others along the same path.

The intellectual discussion is ancillary to the way of life in true philosophy. That discussion can help in shedding wrong ideas, but can never lead to discovery of ultimate truth. This latter comes only through the disciplined life. How difficult it is for the professor as well as student in the modern university to realize what the black “academic” gown which scholars (as well as lawyers and priests) wear today, signified in its original context: It is still called the “academic” gown because it was the uniform worn by student and teacher alike in Plato’s academy. It was actually a shroud worn by the corpse on its way to the burial ground. It stood for renunciation of the pleasures and gratifications of the body—a sort of acceptance of the death of the body ahead of time. It meant good-bye to the feverish quest for money and power, for popularity and fame, for comfort and affluence, for tenure and promotion, for “reviewers” acclaim and best-seller markets, for the pleasures of middle class living.

To this kind of philosophy as renunciation of worldly pleasures, stands in stark contrast the sophistic technology of rhetorical discourse, which had developed enormously in the fourth century. Technology today means the systematic treatment of *techne* or the art of making things—the *logia* (discourse) about *techne* (art or way of doing something). But in ancient Hellenism, the *technologos* was the *technos* of the *logos*, the artisan of using words, the expert in rhetoric, the one who knows about prosody and metre, about sophistic arguments and debating techniques, about persuasion and perhaps, demagoguery. The *technologos* pretended to be wise, or showed himself as wise (*sophos*). Pythagoras did not want to be called *sophos*, but probably coined the name *philosophos*¹ as an alternative, regarding God alone as truly wise, and the philosopher as a friend of God. The concept of philosophy as love of the higher good came to be very much corrupted in post-Pythagorean Pagan development until fourth century Christians made *philosophia* once again synonymous with the ascetic life, particularly, monastic life. Eunomius was more of a sophist and a rhetorician than a *philosophos* in the Pythagorean sense. Gregory on the other hand was one who sought philosophy in the later Christian sense,² as

1 Diogenes Laertius tells us that “Φιλοσοφίαν δὲ πρῶτος ὠνόμασε Πυθαγόρας καὶ ἑαυτὸν φιλόσοφον, ἐν Σικυωνί διαλεγόμενος Λέοντι τῷ Σικυωνίων τυράννῳ ἢ Φλιασίῳ, καθά φησιν Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Ποντικός ἐν τῇ Περί τῆς ἄπνου: μηδὲνα γὰρ εἶναι σοφὸν [ἄνθρωπον] ἄλλ’ ἢ θεόν.” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, I, Prooem. 12 [Hicks, 12]).

2 Clement of Alexandria (second century) spoke of the ascetical practice of philosophy (“philosophian askein”, *Stromatis* I [GCS 15]) and John Chrysostom (fourth century) spoke about

an ascetic way of life. But he has shown also prowess and talent in using *technologia* or rhetoric and sophistry in the less honorable sense, to win a point in debate.

The debate between Gregory of Nyssa and Eunomius takes place within a milieu where the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition of serious life-oriented philosophy co-existed with the more exhibitionistic tradition of sophistic rhetoric. Both Gregory and Eunomius used all the tricks of rhetoric in their debate. At the point of using rhetorical tricks Gregory was not much nobler than Eunomius. In the pursuit of *philosophia* however Eunomius and Gregory followed two different paths, with two different starting points and two different methods, as we shall make clear in the conclusion.

Our judgment today in the Eunomius-Gregory debate cannot be on the basis of whose arguments are more logically water-tight or more fallacious. Christians especially will have to choose today between the different starting points, the different objectives, and the different methods that the two debaters used.

I The Nature of the Platonic Tradition

Precisely because Platonism had a higher notion of the task of philosophy, it becomes difficult for the modern university, a daughter of the European Enlightenment, to come to real terms with Platonic philosophy. Mistaking philosophy to be the effort to articulate knowledge precisely and clearly, the European academy, today a universal institution, misunderstands Platonism as “idealism”, “world of ideas”, and so on. In Plato’s academy two names were highly revered—those of Pythagoras and Socrates. Socrates was more vividly remembered, since Plato and many of his interlocutors had personally known Socrates before his death. Pythagoras lived more distantly in the past. He left so little of his writing to posterity, whereas all of Socrates’ teaching was remembered at first hand by the great master Plato himself. And yet Pythagoras and Socrates had both contributed enormously to the development of Platonic tradition. And both were regarded as basically religious teachers, teachers of a way of life and worship, not as mere professors of logic and rhetoric.

It is this religious aspect of the Platonic tradition that modern university studies of Plato most ignore or marginalize. Take the great western thinker Bertrand Russell as an example. Russell in fact thought Plato to be more like

the zeal for the philosophy of the monks (“ten ton monachon philosophian zelosai”, *In Matthaeum* LV 6 [PG 58, 548,51]).

himself a nonreligious academic philosopher. He blames Porphyry, the Syrian disciple and biographer of Plotinus for making Platonism religious. In fact Lord Russell, a late rationalist, has little use for Plotinus himself, and blames him for misunderstanding Plato, in taking Plato's "theory of ideas, the mystical doctrines of the *Phaedo* and book VI of the *Republic*, and the discussion of love in the *Symposium*"³ as making up the whole of Plato. Lord Russell takes a distinctly greater interest in Plato's political ideas, in his definitions of particular virtues, and his discussion of the pleasures of mathematics. Using outmoded and anachronistic categories Russell accuses Porphyry of being more Pythagorean than Platonic, and as more "super-naturalist" than Plotinus. Russell's summary of Plotinus shows clearly how difficult it is for a post-enlightenment European rationalist, or for a modern philosopher trained in that tradition to come to terms with the religious element in Plato and Plotinus.

Plato's Socrates as a Religious Genius

According to A.E. Taylor, Plato wrote his *Symposium* "plainly to call our attention to a marked feature in the character of Socrates. He is at heart mystic and there is something otherworldly about him".⁴ Aristodemus tells us the story of Socrates going into "standing rapture" for a whole day and a night.⁵ But that is possibly another misunderstanding, to regard Socrates' "mystical" rapture as the source of his wisdom and discernment, and therefore to seek that rapture as a means of knowing the ultimate.

No, for Plato's Socrates, what matters is not the rapture, but the teaching and discipline into which one is initiated and in which one grows. Socrates' *Guru* was Diotima, the Priestess of Mantinea. Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, reported by Socrates, according to Taylor, is unique in pre-Plotinian Greek literature.⁶ Taylor sees Diotima's description of love or *eros* ascending to the highest good as bearing close resemblance to Saint John of the Cross' description of the journey of the soul. W. Hamilton, in his introduction to the Penguin English translation of the *Symposium*, says about the Diotima speech:

Diotima describes it in terms borrowed from the mysteries, partly no doubt, because it is a gradual progress comparable to the stages of an initiation, and partly because *the final vision is a religious rather than an*

3 B. Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, New York 1945, 287 ff.

4 A.E. Taylor, *Plato. The Man and His Work*, London 1926/1960, 211.

5 Plato, *Symposium*, 174 ff.

6 A.E. Taylor, *Plato. The Man and His Work*, 225.

intellectual experience, and like the culminating revelation of mystery religion, is not to be described or communicated.⁷

Here is another of the problems of modern university studies, which seem to assume that something never could have existed or happened which has not been written about. Literature is a very unreliable guide to the past, as every archaeologist knows. Neither Plato's Socrates nor Plotinus would speak or write extensively about the secret teaching about religious discipline and mystical experience. The error of the modern academic student is to make literary silence a testimony for the nonexistence of such religious discipline and experience. And yet, Plato tells us enough to give us a glimpse of that discipline and teaching of Diotima of Mantinea, which can be taken to be the centre of Plato's own teaching in the Academy. Love is the secret-love as *eros*, as desire and craving for fulfilment. It can be directed to any of three levels: pleasure, money, power, physical prowess at the lowest level above that the second level, where love is directed to knowledge and wisdom; and at the third and highest level, love of the supremely, totally and absolutely good. As the soul ascends the ladder of the mysteries of love, at the end of her ascent, there is revealed to love (not to knowledge):

a beauty whose nature is marvellous indeed, the final goal, o Socrates, of all her previous efforts. This beauty is first of all eternal, it neither comes into being nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes; next, it is not beautiful in part and ugly in part, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in this relation and ugly in that ... She will see it as absolute, existing alone with itself, unique, eternal, and all other beautiful things as partaking of it, yet in such a manner that, while they come into being and pass away, it neither undergoes any increase or diminution nor suffers any change.⁸

Diotima, says Plato, advised Socrates to stay all one's life in this region of the "contemplation of all beauty". This contemplation, however, by no means is a purely intellectual one. Ardent and passionate, it entails a secret discipline of training the *eros* to desire the absolute good. Plato's Socrates makes mention of this secret discipline only in one tantalising sentence: "I declare that it is the duty of every man to honour love, and I honour and *practice the mysteries of love*

⁷ W. Hamilton, *Plato. The Symposium*, Harmondsworth 1951/1959, 24.

⁸ Plato, *The Symposium* (Eng. tr. Hamilton, 93–94).

in an especial degree myself, and recommend the same to others".⁹ Socrates learned these "practices of the mysteries of love" from Diotima the priestess, whose religious offices and sacrifices, according to Socrates (and Plato), postponed the plague from hitting Athens for ten years.¹⁰

Socrates was no intellectual, no rhetorician or academic, like Lycon his accuser or Georgias or Hippias, or Evenus the Parian, or like a modern university professor. Socrates was of course a great questioner, an expositor of contradictions, a ridiculer of facetious arguments, a logician of the first waters when he wanted to be. But the secret of this life was his "practice of the mysteries of love", and the muse or divinity upon whom he depended for guidance, as he told the Athenians in his famous *Apologia*: "You have heard me speak at some times and in some places of a divine element or demon which comes to me (*moi theion ai kai daimonion gignetai*). For me this began from my childhood. It is a voice which comes to me, always turning me away from what I am going to do, but never telling me what to do".¹¹

"Mysticism" in Greece did not start with Plotinus, nor is it an oriental element. Socrates' capacity to perceive truth, to expose contradictions and to ridicule sham and pretension, came from an "inner life" of the "mysteries of love", of worship, of what came to be called in our hopelessly academic language "theurgic mysticism of the later Neo-Platonists". Socrates was a poet of the good, a "*poietaes of arete*", a procreator or creator of the good. And for Plato, this is central—not the doctrines about *hyle* and *idea*. Plato's ideal, ascribed to Socrates, is to bring forth, or to beget the good, to nurture and train the good; that is the true desire of all souls.

Our misunderstanding of both Plato and Socrates comes from our academic malformation. The manifest technique which Plato and Socrates used was dialogue and dialectical or Socratic questioning. But we see today how despicably poor mere logical analysis can be in promoting virtue, compared to the Socratic analysis. The difference between the two is that logical analysis presupposes and demands only linguistic consistency as the quality of truth, whereas in the Socratic analysis, there is a prior perception of truth which comes from the "practice of the mysteries of Love" and not merely from the requirements of logic. It is this practice of the mysteries of love by participation (*methexis* or *metousia*) in the *ariste psyche* of God that both Plato and Socrates advocated. It is the vision of truth, of which one is usually always largely silent, that informs

9 Plato, *The Symposium* (Eng. tr. Hamilton, 95).

10 Plato, *The Symposium* (Eng. tr. Hamilton, 79).

11 Plato, *Apologia Sokratous*, 31c (Croiset, 160–161).

the philosophy of Plato and Socrates, not logic, nor pure thinking. That vision is always born of a discipline of worship, and one speaks little about it, and writes less.

When Plato draws attention to the “standing rapture” of Socrates for a whole day and night, he is pointing to the true secret of all genuine wisdom—the participation, beyond all discursive rationality, in the absolute good.

Not all that Plato taught is in his extant of extinct writings. The Academy inherited this unwritten teaching (*agrapha dogmata*)¹² of Plato, and embodied it, not just in its class-room exposition, but in the disciplined practice of the mysteries of love in the academy.

The Good was more at the heart of the Academy than the True in an intellectual sense. In fact for them the Good alone was absolutely true. The disciplined pursuit of the Good, rather than satisfactory intellectual explanations of reality as it is, constituted the central thrust of the Academy, in the days of Plato as in the days of his successors.

Of course the discourse in the Academy debated fine points of logic whether the geometrical point was a fiction of the geometers or the starting point of a line, the beginning of a flow rather than a minimum of static volume. These discourses were necessary for the shaping of the mind to perceive reality. The central concern, however, was what Plato put in the mouth of Socrates and his priestess-guru, Diotima, not the discussions about forms or ideas. To know the truth is to choose the good. And to choose the good is to pursue the good through a disciplined life. Even when academicians succumbed to the temptation of giving priority to intellectual knowledge over the quality of being, the academy never completely separated the True from the Good and the Adorable. The main concern of the academy was to grow wings for the soul. “The divine is beauty wisdom, goodness and the like; and by these the wing of the soul is nourished, and grows apace; but when fed upon evil and foulness and the opposite of good, wastes and falls away”.¹³

I think the point is clear. The secular intellectual Plato and Socrates which the modern university studies have invented are pure fiction. The Platonic tradition was through and through religious and the Academy of Plato was a basically religious movement. It is this religious Plato whom the Jews (circa 20 BC to circa 50 AD) and the Christian Fathers beginning with Clement and Origen (circa 185 AD to circa 254 AD) followed. The Platonic Tradition, much of which has left no literary remains, flourished in the time of Eunomius and Gregory,

¹² Aristotle frequently refers to these *agrapha dogmata* of the Academy.

¹³ Plato, *Phaedrus* (Eng. tr. I. Edman, *The Works of Plato*, New York 1928, 287).

and provided the common intellectual milieu for their debate. It was a living tradition, in which there was no consciousness of any clear distinction either between Platonic and Pythagorean, or between Platonic and Neo-Platonic. It was a rich tradition, in which Christians and pagans shared much. It was a continuous tradition—a *diadoche* or succession of teachers maintaining the Platonic Tradition and developing it. just as Christian Bishops and Fathers maintained and developed the Christian Apostolic Tradition.

II Neo-Platonic Theurgy

“Neo-Platonism,” another invention of the modern university, was in basic continuity with the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition inherited by the Academy. Modern interpretations of Neo-Platonism read Plotinus as if this disciple of Ammonius Saccas was a non-religious philosopher, and, as Russell claimed, that it was Porphyry who introduced the religious element into Neo-Platonism. The *Enneads* of Plotinus, we should not forget, were transcriptions by Porphyry of discourse given without any logical continuity or structure. Plotinus was not a Greek, in the strict sense, but an Egyptian. Those who regard Alexandria as a Greek city with a Greek culture, do not take into account the flow of Egyptian, Syrian and other Asian cultures into it. The Museum of Alexandria absorbed life and thought from as far away as India, beginning at least as early as the first century. The Scribe who took down the notes of the Egyptian Plotinus’ lectures was a Syrian, whose original Syriac name was Malchus or Malko (King) of which the name Porphyry (purple-clad) is a Greek adaptation. Porphyry was perhaps an ex-Christian¹⁴ and certainly an anti-Christian, the author of fifteen books *Against the Christians*. A native of Tyre, he met Plotinus in 262AD, and during the eight years preceding the latter’s death in 270AD, took down notes from lectures and interviews. It is only through Porphyry’s Syrian mind that we have access to the Egyptian mind of Plotinus. And unless our own minds develop something in common with the Egyptian and Syrian minds, we are likely to misunderstand Plotinus as Russell did, and therefore to misunderstand Eunomius. For example, Porphyry’s *Peri Tes Ek Logion Philosophias* was an exposition of the Greek Oracles which so influenced all writers and thinkers of this period. Augustine¹⁵ calls the book *Theologia Philosophias*, and quotes from it, mixing admiration and criticism. But he cites also Porphyry’s comment on the Apol-

14 Cf. Socrates, *HE* I 9,30 (SC 477, 124); *HE* III 23,12–13,29,38 (SC 493, 336–338; 342; 344).

15 Cf. Augustine, *The City of God* XIX 23 (CCSL 48, 690–695).

lonian oracle about Christ, that the Jews have a better understanding of God than the Christians have. The Oracles are clearly an anti-Christian, but probably pro-Jewish, pagan work. The pagan gods and goddesses, Apollo and Hecate, condemn Orthodox Christians as deluded, while Hecate at least praises Christ himself as a noble soul.

One has to see Porphyry's perspective as essentially akin to much modern liberal Christianity, in which the dogmas about Christ's divinity and pre-existence are regarded at best as delusions or superstitions—i.e., absurd beliefs which have survived into a rational age. There is no difficulty in thinking that the Arian bishop of Cyzicus was of the same school. Eunomius was an academic philosopher-theologian, who accepted the "theurgic mysticism" of the pagan philosophers of his time as the standard of truth, and tried to fit his Christian belief into that framework—a framework equally acceptable to Jews as to cultivated pagans.

For Porphyry as for Plotinus, life is a sort of preparation for death and for the life beyond death. *Philosophy* for them also means the practice of virtue rather than the quest for knowledge as such. For both Plotinus and Porphyry, truth and the good are one; doctrine leads to practice; discipline leads to true illumination. Porphyry's early work on the oracles seems a full systematisation of Pythagorean teaching and practice. In the *Enneads* the theurgic practices of Plotinus are not made explicit. So modern western scholarship finds him more attractive, and regards him as a pure philosopher, without the taint of religion. But the theurgy that Porphyry writes about is but an embellishment of the sacrificial-cultic practices of the Platonic Tradition, which Plotinus himself practiced.

What Porphyry seems to have done in his later works like *On the Images of God* (*Peri Agalmaton*)¹⁶ is to make the worship part of the Platonic Tradition more explicit and more philosophically justified. *Peri Agalmaton* was probably written before Porphyry became a disciple of Plotinus. Here the idea of God has become more refined, the disdain for Pythagorean "magical" rites more explicit, a greater confidence evident in the power of reason.

Porphyry seems to have moved from Neo-Pythagoreanism to Neo-Platonism, after he had left Christianity (if ever he was a Christian). Ammonius Saccas probably influenced him in his younger days, but it was after a bout of Neo-Pythagoreanism that Porphyry came back to Plotinian Neo-Platonism. Plotinus was the teacher of the aristocracy. His main pupils were professionals like

16 We have a few fragments of *Peri Agalmaton* in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* III 7; 9; 11; 12; 13 (GCS VIII/1, 122 ff.; 126 ff.; 135–151).

the medical doctors Eustochius and Paulinus, bankers like Serapion, Senators like Orontius, Sabinillus and Rogatian.¹⁷ The teaching of Plotinus was never intended for the masses. Its attraction was for the upper and middle classes, among whom the religiously inclined had only disdain for Christianity. Before Plotinus came on the scene, the upper and middle classes oscillated between various forms of Platonism and Pythagoreanism or Gnosticism adopted for their needs. During the second century, what we today call “Middle Platonism”, but which in fact was an always religiously oriented reinterpretation of Pythagoras and Plato, had already become prevalent among the aristocracy. Plutarch and Gaius, Albinus and Apuleius, as well as Atticus, taught a Plato who was able to satisfy the religious needs of the cultured. Plato, for these people became the theoretician of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, a legislator for the true and refined religious life.

Plutarch (died circa 120 AD) above all had lifted up the Concept of the One, *to hen*, as the ultimate reality, as distinct from the multiple or *polla*. *To hen* was *to on*. *Hen einai dei to on*. Being had to be One. It is this plutarchian reconciliation of *hen* and *on* that Plotinus picked up and made central to his teaching.¹⁸ But the concept of the One who is transcendent and beyond all multiple reality was a common concept in the first and second century Mediterranean culture among the philosophically inclined. One sees it in any Platonist, including Philo of Alexandria. This One is so transcendent, that the world of the many can have contact with it only through an intermediary like Philo’s *Logos* or Plotinus’ *Nous*. The intellectual transcendence of God, which the Jewish and Christian Fathers called the “incomprehensibility of God”, was also common coin among the pagan intellectuals. To get to the One, one has to shed the dragging weight of matter and the multiple. When finally the contact is made, it is not the reasoning mind that sees; it is a new eye opened in the heart; a sudden opening of the soul’s eye as if waking from a dream,¹⁹ that sees the light. But it was Plutarch again who put the *nous* above the *psyche*. Since the One is pure intelligible, the *psyche* or soul has to rise above both body and soul, to the *nous* which is far superior to the soul. For Plutarch if the body is the earth, while the soul is related to it like the moon to the earth, only the *nous* is bright and superior, like the Sun.²⁰

Albinus, a disciple of Gaius whom Plotinus read, along with Apuleius, a fellow-disciple of Gaius, had paved the way for Plotinus’ final integration with

17 Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 7 (Brisson II, 146).

18 Cf. Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos* 20 (Sieveking, 21–22).

19 Philo, *De Abrahamo* xv (Colson, 38–40).

20 Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* LXXVII (Froidefond, 247).

the Neo-Platonist Trinity of the three hypostases—the One, the *nous*, and the *psyche*. Albinus' three hypostases were:

- a) the first God, who is the first Good, the *hyperouranios Theos*, the primary Intellect;
- b) the second Intellect, the *ouranios nous*, the world soul, the Platonic *kosmos noetos*;
- c) the Soul of the *psyche* which creates the multiple.²¹

This is not to say that Plotinus simply systematized Gaius, Albinus and Apuleius. We mean to suggest that the idea of a platonic trinity of three hypostases was already current in the literature which Plotinus read and to which Eunomius had access. The Platonic Trinity was the most respectable doctrine in the fourth century Mediterranean. Eunomius rather uncritically accepted it, and accommodated it to his Anomoian faith. Our main point, however, is to draw attention to the basically religious orientation of Middle Platonism, as well as of Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. All Platonic philosophy was an attempt to counter-act the pressures of the carnal, material body, a *lysis kai periagoge psyches apo somatos*, a separation of the soul from the body, for *homoiosis Theoi kata to dynaton*, for a resemblance or configuration to God according to capacity. This is so in Plutarch and Apuleius as in the less religious Albinus. We often forget that Numenius,²² Plotinus and Porphyry were all disciples of both Plato and Pythagoras. The two basic options available outside Christianity and Judaism for second or third century seekers were platonized Pythagoreanism and Gnosticism.

Peripateticism of the Aristotelian school, and Stoicism in their various versions, as well as Epicureanism, had lost their organizational strength. Aristotle and the Stoics deeply influenced Plotinus as well as Eunomius. But Neo-Pythagoreanism and Gnosticism were clearly demarcated doctrines of specially organized groups, with their own cults and religious practices. Neo-Platonism is basically anti-Gnostic and pro-Pythagorean. Pythagoras was more akin to Plato than the wild speculations of Gnosticism. Plotinus, Porphyry tells us, wrote a treatise, *Against the Gnostics*.²³ This seems to have been directed against Christian Gnostics, who were organized in some sort of "house-

²¹ See R. Arnou, "Platonisme", *DTC* XI, 2272 ff.

²² Our access to Numenius is basically through fragments conserved by Proclus or Eusebius.

²³ Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 16 (Brisson II, 158; Eng. tr. S. Mackenna, *Plotinus. The Enneads*, London 4969, 11).

churches", and thrived on many books of "revelation". "Plotinus frequently attacked their position at his conferences," Porphyry tells us.

Every attack on Gnosticism by these Platonists was a support, not so much for Orthodox Christianity, as for other pagan groups whose religion was an amalgam of Plato, Pythagoras and the mystery-cults. "Plotinus, it would seem, set the principles of Pythagoras and of Plato in a clearer light than anyone before him",²⁴ says Longinus (213–273AD), friend and contemporary of both Plotinus and Porphyry, who himself repeats that Plotinus followed Plato and Pythagoras.

Porphyry also tells us that Plotinus, by following the ways of meditation and discipline, became "God-like and lifting himself often, ... to the first and all-transcendent God" and God appeared to him. The supreme end of Plotinus' life was to become one with the One, and according to Porphyry "four times, during the period I passed with him, he attained this end, by no mere natural fitness, but by *the ineffable Act*".²⁵

Plotinus was a "theurgist", one who sought and served the transcendent God, and was often protected from error by God. For him also philosophy was religion, and religion was philosophy. It is this Neo-Pythagorean, Neo-Platonist, theurgic, religious philosophy of the Platonic Tradition that Porphyry and Iamblichus set forth more clearly, and which was the secret religion and faith of Eunomius, the Arian bishop of Cyzicus. The goal of Middle Platonist philosophy was the direct vision of God and the configuration (*homoiosis*) to God that would result. Justin Martyr tells us that he took to the study of Plato for that purpose. So did Clement of Alexandria and Origen possibly, as well as the later Fathers of the Church. And why not, perhaps Eunomius too? Whatever Plotinus taught, we know mainly through Porphyry's Neo-Pythagorean arrangement of that material into six groups (*enneads*) of nine chapters each. The numbers six and nine have to be traced to Neo-Pythagoreanism than to Plotinus himself. But neither Plotinus nor Porphyry or Iamblichus was free from Neo-Pythagorean influence. This influence can be seen in later writers like Proclus and the Pseudo-Areopagite, with his nine choirs of angels in the *Celestial Hierarchy*. In the development of the Tradition (Platonic Tradition) religion and philosophy were always unseparable.

The main difference between the pagans in the Platonic Tradition and the Christians sharing the Platonic Tradition were three:

24 Porphyry, *Vita Plotinii* 20 (Brisson II, 166–168; Eng. tr., Mackenna, 14–15).

25 Porphyry, *Vita Plotinii* 23 (Brisson II, 174; Eng. tr., Mackenna, 18).

Pagans in the Platonic tradition

(1) The transcendent One is totally one, beyond all duality or multiplicity; there are three initial hypostases, the One, the *Nous* and the *Psyche*, but the One does not admit any plurality; the *Nous*, however is Being, i.e. one-and-many, as Plato's Parmenides said.

(2) The One engenders the *Nous* by *emanation*, as the operation (*energeia*) of the One. The *Nous* in turn engenders the *Psyche* by this operation (*emanation*). And the *Psyche* engenders the world of multiplicity by its operation. The three are different in status, rank and operations.

(3) In a human person, the reality is the soul, which is eternal, immortal, and of the same genus as the three initial hypostases (One, *Nous* and World-soul). The body is a drag and the human soul has to be freed from it, to be alienated from it and to rise towards the One, by disciplined effort. The soul is freed and it is in its nature to make this effort and to rise toward, the One, by turning inward, ignoring the world of things, towards the Centre of One's being, and through that centre to the Centre of all centres, to be merged and

Orthodox Christians (Nicean) in the Platonic tradition

(1) The transcendent One is both One and Three. This Triune One is beyond all multiplicity and we can provide no analogy for understanding the three in one. There is no room for number of quantity in the Three-in-One, which is infinite. There is not multiple, because three is one.

(2) The Three-in-One creates the world of multiplicity by a process (creation) quite different from the eternal generation of the Second Hypostasis from the First. The Third Hypostasis is not generated by the Second, but proceeds from the First. And the Three-in-One by their joint operation, creates the world of multiplicity out of nothing. And time begins with creation, not before it. The Three together create all things and there is no difference in status or rank between them. The one *ousia* of the three has one operation.

(3) In a human person, body and soul are both real, both created together by the Tri-une God, in God's image. This image is reflected in the body and the soul. When the soul separates itself from evil, and is surrendered to its creator, it is able to bring the body under control and to use it for creativity of the good. This separation from evil and surrender to God is a synergistic act, where the soul, in its freedom is helped by God. The soul is bound, in prison, and has to be liberated; besides the rising towards God and the free creativity of the good are synergistic acts in which

Pagans in the Platonic tradition**Orthodox Christians (Nicean) in the Platonic tradition**

become one with that Centre, beyond Being. This is done through a secret discipline of worship and ascetic practices of which one speaks or writes very little.

the human being and God act together. The rising in the good is infinite. There is no Term or Final End, but an eternal rising in joy towards the Three-in-One, in the infinite Three-in-One.

Christians affirmed the unity of the Transcendent One just as strongly as the Arians and the Neo-Pythagorean Neo-Platonists. Both Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa strongly affirm the principle “Not Three Gods.” Nazianzen’s fifth theological oration and Nyssa’s sermon on *Not Three Gods* leave us in no doubt on this.

III The Formation of Eunomius

But Eunomius does not belong to this world of Nicene Orthodoxy. He belongs intellectually to the pagan Platonist world, with its theurgy, but Christian by profession, and trying to reconcile the two, in an anomoian context. Plotinus said nothing of any cultic discipline—at least nothing explicit. He is silent, even in Porphyry’s *Version*, about any mystical experience or religious rite. The ascent to the One is described in metaphors—rising, responding to voices from on high, becoming present to the Supreme One, moving from the external to the internal, seeing the light, going beyond oneself, polishing the statue, cutting away everything, return to one’s origins, return to one’s fatherland.

Elevation, introversion, return and vision leading to union there is for this obviously as method, a technique, a training (*Ennead* I speaks of a Proficient, a trainee for the Final End); this training is not to add something, but to take something away, something that hinders the ascent of the soul. *Ennead* I 6,6 speaks about purification through moral discipline, courage and every virtue.²⁶ In this sixth tractate of the first *Ennead*, Plotinus speaks about approaching the Holy Celebrations of the Mysteries.²⁷ In Plotinus’ school, feasts were kept, e.g.,

²⁶ Cf. Plotin, *Ennead* I 6,6 (Henry—Schwyzer I, 99–100).

²⁷ Cf. Plotin, *Ennead* I 6,7 (Henry—Schwyzer I, 100–102).

Plato's feast;²⁸ papers were read, debates were held.²⁹ None of the accounts however mention any religious rites. This is, however, no reason to think that Plotinus was an academic. He was certainly an ascetic, one who fasted and brought his body under subjection, in order to be free from its demand. But of this discipline, the *Enneads* tell us little.

Porphry wrote a *Life of Pythagoras* and a work *On Abstaining from Meat*. There is little doubt that Porphyry the Syrian practised some Pythagorean disciplines of fasting and abstentions. If Porphyry also took part in mystery cults, he would naturally refrain from disclosing them in his writings, because such secrecy is required by the mystery cults. Porphyry died at the beginning of the fourth century. Eunomius may have known him through his writings only.

Iamblichus who died around 330 was also personally unknown to Eunomius, who went to Alexandria around 350 AD to study under Aetius. Aetius who was from Antioch on the other hand, probably knew Iamblichus, who was just as much Pythagorean as Plotinian, and wrote an *Introduction to the Doctrines of Pythagoras*. In fact Iamblichus considered himself a Pythagorean. Aedesius who established the school in Syria was also a Pythagorean and a disciple of Iamblichus. Both Porphyry and Iamblichus belonged to the theurgic Plotinus Platonic Tradition, to which Proclus gave fuller expression in the second half of the fifth century. Philosophy is a hierophant of the universe—Proclus stated—and has to express this in worship. This concept is conceivably of Christian origin but has its roots also in the Pythagorean and Socratic traditions which antedate Plato and Christianity. According to the Christians also, the Eucharist was a sacrifice on behalf of the whole of humanity and the whole of creation, as the texts of some Christian liturgies remind us.

Theurgy of the Platonic Tradition has often been interpreted as the result of an impact of the Oriental religions. But it is just as legitimate to conceive it partly as the influence of a successful Christian practice of the Eucharist which the pagans imitated. Any pagan could see that the Eucharist was the source of cohesion and strength for the Christians. The pagans, out of a background of the mystery religions and Pythagorean practices, developed forms of worship which we now call "theurgy". Even Julian the Apostate, in reopening pagan temples, had in mind the formation of a pagan theurgy which would function like the Christian Eucharistic liturgy.

Theurgy was the technique accessible to the common people, especially for Egyptians and Syrians, to raise souls towards the One. Iamblichus it was,

28 Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotinii* 15 (Brisson II, 156).

29 Cf. Porphyry, *Vita Plotinii* 18 (Brisson II, 160–162).

perhaps more than others, who worked out the role of symbols and symbolic actions in raising the soul towards the One. For Plotinus, the three first hypostases could also be named *Ouranos* (Bachus), *Chronos* (Saturn) and *Zeus* (Jupiter). He saw no conflict between his system made for the aristocrats and the people's religion properly interpreted. But all "things" had to be dialectically used for mounting upward. It was in this tradition, as also in the Aristotelian or Peripatetic tradition that Eunomius had been trained.

Theurgy stayed theoretically in this framework of using things as symbols for ascending towards the One. In practice however the demonic powers were sought after and acquired. Eunomius was less of a symbolist than his contemporary Neo-Platonists, but he too practised some form of theurgy, possibly one transformed by Christian practice.³⁰ Eunomius accepted Christ as *Monogenes*, but not as *homousion* with the Father. Christ was begotten or *gennetos*. Neither was Christ a man like other man, because he was produced by the unique *energeia* of the One, which generated nothing but the Son, who is therefore also unique. Eunomius, as bishop (Anomoian) of Cyzicus, must have often presided over the Christian Eucharistic liturgy. Whether he also saw the Christian Eucharist within the model of pagan theurgy we have no way of determining. There need be no doubt that the Anomoian group led by Eunomius was seeking to work out a compromised Christianity that they hoped would be acceptable to pagans and Jews alike.

IV Aetius, Eunomius and the Trinity

Platonic or pagan theurgy, refurbished by replacing the dialectic reason of Plato with the non-contradiction logic of Aristotle, within Christian forms and names explains Aetius, and to a large extent Eunomius. Aetius was a Coelesyrian, who studied Aristotle's logic under a peripatetician in Alexandria, and also studied Arian theology in Antioch. For him the Aristotelian syllogism alone gave a firm grasp of truth.

Aetius wandered between Alexandria and Antioch, became exposed also to Platonic theurgy, but concentrated, under George of Cappadocia, on Arius and Aristotle. Eunomius is his disciple, less Aristotelian, more sophist, but deeply immersed in the Platonic theurgy. Eunomius learned from Aetius what the latter put down in his work: *Theology or the Art of Sophistication*. And he uses

30 See Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 54 (GNO I, 40,18–20) speaks of Eunomius' "τὴν τε ἀπόρητον ἐκείνην μυσταγωγίαν καὶ οἷα παρὰ τοῦ σεμνοῦ τῶν μυστηρίων ἱεροφάντου διδάσκονται."

the *technologia* (i.e., technique of using discourse) fully in agreement with the principles of the Second Sophistique. The passage cited by Gregory of Nyssa in *Contra Eunomium* I 151 is a clear exposition of the Trinitarian lore of the Platonic Theurgy that we have been speaking about:

Here is a summary of our whole teaching: 'From the highest and Supreme-most Being, and from this, through it, after it, but before all else, a second Being. And a third, but in no way to be put on the same level as the two others, but subordinated to the One as its cause (*aitia*) and to the second as its birth-giving operation (*energeia*)'.³¹

This is clearly the Trinity of the three initial hypostases of Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. The three Beings or *Ousiai* have each its own operation (*energeia*) which follows (*parepomenon*) it, the names coming into being with the operation, according to Eunomius.

Eunomius insists, with the clarity of Aristotle's logic of non-contradiction, that each *ousia* has its separate *energeia*, and the *energeiae* of the three are different from each other; the hypostases, each of which is single and identical only with itself, give birth to different *energeiai* or operations. The *erga* or result of these operations we can study, and from these operations we can understand the *ousia* which produced them. From *erga* to *energeia* to *ousia* we can rise to the being of God, according to Eunomius.

Nyssa pricks a hole in Eunomius' logic at the outset. If the names of the three Beings come into being along with their *energeiai*, as Eunomius insists, why doesn't he mention these names, namely Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Why does Eunomius suppress these names and use circumlocutions like "*anotate kai kyriotate ousia*" instead of Father, and more complicated phrases for the Son and the Holy Spirit? Nyssa regards Eunomius as a crypto-pagan; determined to undermine the faith of the Church from within.³² More explicitly, Nyssa accuses Eunomius of advocating the Jewish doctrine of God, attributing God-head only to the Father.³³

Nyssa's argument about being and existence can easily escape us. For him *ousia*, i.e., being or is-ness, does not permit degrees. "By what *sophia* (wisdom or sophistry) does he distinguish between more and less in being?" (*To mallon te kai hetton tes ousias*). There cannot be more being and less being, because

³¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 151 ff. (GNO I, 71 ff.).

³² Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 158 ff. (GNO I, 74 ff.).

³³ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 177 (GNO I, 79,10).

being is a simple predicate. This is particularly so for the Divine being, for Gregory. There is no quantity of more or less in the infinite being.

Neither is there sub-ordination or super-ordination in the divine nature. Subjection or sub-ordination is only for the creation. If the Son is subject to the Father in Christian faith, it is only the Son as part of creation, not as Creator. Nyssa's radical refutation of Eunomius does not come from any logical demonstration, though he exposes the logical untenability of many of Eunomius' arguments. The dispute is not between two philosophers and cannot be settled by the arbitration of a third philosopher. The controversy is between two group convictions—that of the Church and that of the Anomoians: "So then the whole fight and word-battle between the Church people (*ekklesiastikoi*) and the Anomoians (*anomoiai*), is about whether the Son and the Holy Spirit are created natures as they say or whether they are uncreated (*aktistos physeis*) natures as the Church has believed".³⁴

Clearly both sides are unable to demonstrate logically the createdness or the uncreatedness. Eunomius affirms that there are three initial hypostases or beings, following the Neo-Pythagorean Neo-Platonist theurgic school to which he really and secretly belongs, while serving as Arian bishop of Cyzicus. Gregory of Nyssa affirms that there is only one uncreated Being: "The Church's teaching is not to divide the faith among many beings (*plethos ousion*), but in three persons (*prosopois*) and hypostases (*hypostasesi*), never different in being-ness (*einai*), while our opponents posit variety and difference among the beings".³⁵

Simplicity and infinitude—*aploun kai apeiron*—that is the divine nature. And if all the first three hypostases are simple and infinite, then one simple and infinite cannot be greater or lesser than another.³⁶ Eunomius obviously regarded the three initial hypostases as simple, but whether he regarded the second and the third as infinite is doubtful. In fact even the simplicity is less perfect as one comes down the scale of Eunomius' three initial hypostases. The Father seems to be more perfectly simple than the Son and the Holy Spirit in whom there seems to be more admixture of compoundness.

Nyssa's final clinching of the argument comes from a direct statement of the faith of the Church, which we summarize thus:

Being can be ultimately divided into intelligible and sensible (*to noeton kai to aistheton*); the intelligible world can be divided again into uncre-

34 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 220 (GNO I, 90,20–24).

35 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 229 (GNO I, 94,1–5).

36 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 235–236 (GNO I, 95–96).

ated and created (*aktistos kai ktiste*). Larger and smaller exist only in the sensible part of the created world, i.e., where there is size and extension. Even in the intelligible part of creation, greater and less would have to be measured by other than size or extension.

The source-spring of all Good (*pantos agathou pege*), the beginning (*arche*), the treasure-house (*choregia*), is seen as in the Uncreated Nature. The whole created order is inclined (*neneuken*) towards this, and subsists by sharing in the First Good of the Supreme Nature, in contact with it and participating in it, by necessity in proportion to the varying (some more, some less) measure of freedom of will each had (*kata to autexousion tes proaireseos metalambanonton*).³⁷

It is the share of this freedom of the will and consequent participation of less and more in the First Good, that becomes the measure of greater and lesser in the created intelligible world. Created intelligible nature stands on the frontier (*methorios*) between good and evil, capable of either. Degree is then decided by greater removal from evil and further advance in the Good.³⁸

But these distinctions have no place in the Uncreated Intelligible Nature. It does not come to the good by acquisition, nor participates in it by measure. It is itself the fullness of good and the source of good. Any distinction within the Uncreated is not in terms of more and less—not of quantity of good, but only by virtue of the uniqueness of the Three Persons. The three Persons are all uncreated, infinite, fullness of good in each.³⁹

That is a summary of Gregory's teaching, based on the Church's faith. Nyssa then goes on to refute Eunomius' argument that the Father is "prior" or "senior" to the Son, being more ancient, and therefore worthy of greater honour. This of course was the key argument of all Arians: that there was a then when the Son was not; that the Father had first to exist before the Son could be begotten; therefore that there was a time-interval (*diastema*) between the Father and the Son.

Nyssa's argument is clear. First, the universal statement that time belongs to the created order and that there is no time interval in the Uncreated.⁴⁰ Second, attributing time interval within the Creator introduces a logical anomaly.

37 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 274 (GNO I, 106,11–22).

38 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 275 (GNO I, 106–107).

39 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 270 ff. (GNO I, 105 ff.); summary by present writer.

40 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 340 ff. (GNO I, 127 ff.).

If the Son began at a particular point in time, and if the Father existed for a fixed (finite) period of time before that, the finite age of the Son plus the finite period of the Father's existence before that would give the finite age of the Father, since the sum of two finite numbers has to be finite. This would make the Infinite God finite, which is absurd.⁴¹

Conclusion

The debate between Gregory of Nyssa and Eunomius, part of which is reflected in *Contra Eunomium* I, cannot be understood as between a Nicene Platonist and an Aristotelian Gnostic. Gregory of Nyssa of course speaks out of Nicene Orthodoxy, and uses the *technologia* of the Second Sophistique, just as much as his opponent. But Nyssa has learned all he can from the Platonic Tradition of searching for unity with the One through worship. Nyssa has, however, sifted the prevailing system of pagan philosophy through a religious-dogmatic sieve—the faith in the Triune God and in the historical Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. For Gregory, the faith of the Church was the standard by which all outside knowledge was to be tested and sifted, though in that testing and sifting, or rather after that testing and sifting, the technology of outside logic could be used to the hilt. It is not that logic that yields the truth. But once the truth is firmly grasped on the basis of faith, logic can be fully used to refute error.

Eunomius, on the other hand, is no Aristotelian Gnostic. Most likely he agreed with Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists as well as with Neo-Pythagoreans, in being anti-Gnostic. No doubt Eunomius has much more confidence in the non-contradiction logic of the Aristotelian syllogism than in the dialectical Socratic logic of Plato. Eunomius' basic effort however, is to bring the faith of the Church in line with prevailing outside philosophy. He probably hoped, like many today who advocate indigenisation or secularisation of the faith, thereby to win pagans and Jews for the Christian faith. The Cappadocians were the main obstacle in the way. Hence the fury of his personal attack on Basil, which, according to Gregory, caused Basil's death. Gregory, perhaps because of this belief of his that Basil died because of Eunomius' scurrilous attack, has also been unsparing in his personal attacks on Eunomius.

History has given the verdict in favour of the Cappadocians. But the basic problem is still with us. Do we, like Eunomius, seek to bring the faith to fit

41 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 346 (GNO I, 129).

the categories of outside knowledge, or can we use the insights of the faith to question some of the assumptions of prevailing outside philosophy? The judgment we have to give today as Christians is a choice between the two projects. Eunomius was prepared to accept the Platonic Tradition as the normative structure within which to accommodate Christianity. Eunomius could do this only by abandoning the two main planks of the Nicene Platform—namely a consubstantial and non-multiple Trinity on the one hand, and a perfectly divine human Christ on the other with the resurrection of the body. The same temptation faces many Christians today to abandon illogical and unscientific concepts like Trinity, incarnation and bodily resurrection. It was also the temptation of those who in modern times, tried to interpret the Gospel in terms of one modern school of western philosophy, be it existentialism, phenomenology, linguistic analysis or structuralism. History has shown us that Eunomian style projects are fore-doomed to failure and disappearance.

The other style of project, which Gregory of Nyssa undertook in the fourth century, has again to be undertaken in our time. Gregory has made a synthesis of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan faith with many elements in the Platonic tradition, thereby making Christian teaching, despite all the logical inconsistencies, the foundation for Byzantine civilization. Today, for our generation of Christians who have come through modern science and modern philosophy, the task is to reinterpret Christianity in a new global context. Remaining faithful to the Trinitarian-Incarnational foundation, we have again to re-examine the assumptions behind modern thought, question the assumptions which are incompatible with the Trinitarian Incarnational faith of the Church, and reformulate the faith as Gregory did in his time—not as Eunomius sought to do.

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Sofística y verdad en el exordio del *Contra Eunomium I**

José Luis Illanes

Abstract

From Plato's dialogues onward, the comparison between philosopher and sophist has become one of the themes or classical points of reference in our language. The essence of Sophism is rooted in the manipulation of word and the adulteration of language that aim not at establishing a communication based on truth, but rather at provoking a behavior by abstracting from the truth itself. On the contrary, philosopher presents himself as a lover of truth, as the one who knows that man fulfills himself not in his pure subjectivity, but in his openness to a reality that transcends him, in communion with the authentic and the true. The Fathers of the Church adopted this terminology and presented Christian religion and faith as the true philosophy or, in the words of Gregory of Nyssa, as "a higher philosophy." This article analyzes how Gregory bases his comprehension of the philosopher's and the sophist's attitudes on the presentation of Eunomius he makes in the introduction of *Contra Eunomium I*.

Desde Sócrates y, particularmente, desde los diálogos de Platón, la contraposición entre el filósofo y el sofista constituye uno de los tópicos o puntos de referencia clásicos en nuestro lenguaje. La historiografía, sobre todo la reciente, ha intentado reivindicar la figura del sofista, poniendo de relieve la importancia del viraje intelectual y espiritual acaecido en la Grecia del siglo V antes de

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see J.L. Illanes, "Sofística y verdad en el exordio del 'Contra Eunomio'", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 237–245. For further bibliography related to this topic, see M. Zupi, *Incanto e incantesimo del dire: logica e/o mistica nella filosofia del linguaggio di Platone (Cratilo e Sofista) e Gregorio di Nissa (Contro Eunomio)*, Roma 2007; T. Böhm, "Die Wahrheitskonzeption in der Schrift De vita Moysis von Gregor von Nyssa", *StPatr* 27 (1993) 9–13; J.I. Ruiz Aldaz, "Truth", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco and G. Maspero, *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 761–765.

Cristo y el papel en gran parte positivo de los autores a los que suele designarse con ese nombre.

Hay en ello mucho de cierto, como incluso Platón y Sócrates no dejarían de reconocer. Pero no por ello renunciarían a su dura diatriba contra la sofística, en la que perciben y denuncian una desviación que amenaza constantemente al pensar y al actuar humanos. Desde la perspectiva platónico-socrática, la esencia de la sofística –la que existió en su tiempo y la que puede volver a reaparecer en cualquier otro momento histórico– radica en la manipulación de la palabra, en la adulteración del lenguaje al que se acude no para establecer una comunicación basada en la verdad, sino para provocar un comportamiento, abstrayendo de la verdad misma.

Fenomenológicamente, el primero de los rasgos distintivos de la sofística es la falsedad, la falacia de la argumentación. A un nivel más profundo, esa falsedad traduce y revela un desprecio del otro, de aquel a quien la palabra se dirige, a quien no se valora como hombre, deseando entrar en comunicación con él, sino a quien se considera mero objeto, ser a quien, a través de la adulación o del engaño, se aspira a arrastrar hacia una acción en beneficio propio, es decir de aquel que habla. Para el sofista la palabra deja de ser vehículo de comunicación interpersonal para convertirse en instrumento de poder y de dominio¹. Prolongando el análisis cabe añadir que la sofística implica, radicalmente, olvido o desconocimiento del sentido de la verdad y en consecuencia una presentación de la inteligencia como capacidad argumentativa que, al no alimentarse de la verdad y fundarse en ella, expresa la voluntad del que habla y sus deseos de autoafirmación y de dominio sobre los otros. La mentira y la argumentación sofísticas, mentira y argumentación queridas intencionadamente con vistas a un fin distinto de la verdad, presupone siempre una actitud egocéntrica, que niega la consistencia de lo real y a los otros: en cuanto personas, condenando al propio sofista al vacío y a la alienación respecto del bien y del valor.

Frente al sofista, el filósofo se presenta, de nuevo en la caracterización platónico-socrática, como un enamorado de la verdad, como aquél que sabe que el hombre se realiza no en su pura subjetividad, sino en la apertura a una realidad que le trasciende; como aquél, por tanto, que aspira a la comunión con lo auténtico y lo verdadero y ordena su palabra a descubrir a los otros la realidad que se le ha dado y en la que todos están llamados a participar. La filosofía es, por eso, empeño intelectual, pero, a la vez e inseparablemente, actitud global de la persona, forma de vida, compromiso existencial.

1 Este rasgo ha sido fuertemente subrayado por J. Pieper, *Abuso de poder, abuso de lenguaje*, en *La fe ante el reto de la cultura contemporánea*, Madrid 1980, 218 ss.

Los Padres de la Iglesia, ya casi desde el comienzo mismo de la literatura cristiana, hicieron suya esta terminología, y el trasfondo que presupone, presentando al cristianismo, la fe y religión cristianas, como la filosofía verdadera o, en expresión de Gregorio de Nisa, como “una más alta filosofía”². Una tal forma de hablar recoge el vocabulario precristiano, en consciente continuidad con él, pero introduciendo matices que dependen del nuevo contexto en el que el término “filosofía” resulta situado. El punto de partida del pensar y del vivir cristiano no está constituido por la realidad circundante que, al presentarse a nuestros sentidos y nuestra inteligencia, suscita la admiración e invita a penetrar en la profundidad que descubre o hacia la que apunta, sino la Palabra con la que Dios nos introduce en su ser y en su designio. Desde ese mismo momento, en la literatura patristica, el vocablo filosofía va a ver acentuados algunos de los rasgos que ya poseía en el lenguaje platónico, adquiriendo además otros. Tal y como los Padres la entienden, la filosofía no implica sólo, como ya lo implicaba en los círculos platónicos, disposición para la verdad, elevación del alma, afinamiento del espíritu como fruto de un proceso a la vez de reflexión y de ascesis, sino también, apertura hacia la tradición gracias a la cual la Palabra divina originaria llega a nosotros, y amor a ese Dios que a través de la tradición nos habla. La comunidad, la Iglesia, accede así a primer plano. Filosofar cristianamente es unirse con la Iglesia, identificarse con ella, hacer propia la fe de la que la Iglesia nace y sobre la que está fundada. Y ello con tanto más hondura cuanto que la palabra que la Iglesia trasmite es palabra viva, palabra pronunciada por un Dios que vive en ella y que invita a una relación íntima y personal con Él. La verdad, en contexto cristiano, tiene rasgos personales, por lo que reclama, inseparablemente, conocimiento y amor.

Todo ello repercute también sobre los otros términos a los que venimos haciendo referencia: sofista y sofística. Ciertamente con menos nitidez, dado el uso mucho menos frecuente que los Padres hacen de ellos, pero, no obstante, de forma suficientemente clara, como lo manifiestan concretamente algunos textos del Niseno en la introducción al *Contra Eunomio*, a los que hemos dedicado nuestra atención y nuestro comentario. Ni que decir tiene por lo demás que, al analizarlos, nos interesa la descripción de figuras o actitudes ideales que de ellos se desprende y no el detalle historiográfico; en otras palabras, no entraremos a valorar si la presentación que Gregorio realiza de su adversario, Eunomio, corresponde o no plenamente a la realidad histórica, y nos limitaremos a exponer el modo de entender la actitud del filósofo y del sofista implicado en sus consideraciones.

2 *Vita Macrinae* (GNO VIII/1 390).

Adorno literario y belleza de la verdad

El exordio del primero de los libros del *Contra Eunomio* deja traslucir, bajo la medida de la forma, un profundo enfado de Gregorio de Nisa respecto a aquel cuya obra se dispone a criticar. Enfado, en primer lugar, como hermano de Basilio a quien Eunomio ha atacado violentamente apenas un año después de su muerte, cuando no estaba ya en condiciones de defenderse³. En segundo lugar, como cristiano que ve puesta en duda y negada la fe de la Iglesia. En tercer lugar, como intelectual –como filósofo y teólogo, en el sentido moderno de esos términos– que no puede por menos de reaccionar ante los ultrajes a la verdad y, más aún, ante una obra como la de Eunomio en la que considera que predomina no el afán por la verdad, sino el recurso a la retórica con intención de tergiversación y engaño, en otras palabras, la sofística⁴.

Eunomio es presentado en efecto por el Obispo de Nisa como hombre elegante en la dicción, que ha cuidado hasta el extremo la forma literaria de su pero en quien la abundancia de las palabras sirve sólo para ocultar la vaciedad y falta de rectitud del pensamiento. Al comienzo del estudio, Gregorio de Nisa declara que no toma la pluma y desciende a la palestra para manifestar elocuencia y refinamiento en las palabras: en un combate de ese tipo, en el cual no tiene utilidad alguna reportar la victoria, le cede –dice– de buena gana a Eunomio la palma de vencedor, a la que sin duda aspira. Porque –añade– es hombre “seguidor y cazador de palabras”⁵, un hombre a quien le importa más la apariencia exterior que la realidad, cuyos escritos están formados por una maraña de afirmaciones vanas y extemporáneas y de “algunas cosas aptas para ser entendidas”, y éstas incluso “cubiertas por una infinita muchedumbre de vocablos”. Eunomio promete esmerarse en el cuidado y el esfuerzo en favor de

3 CE I 8–10 (GNO I, 24–25). Recordemos brevemente que Eunomio redactó su *Apología* hacia el año 361; poco después, entre los años 363–365, San Basilio publicó su *Contra Eunomio*; éste dejó pasar catorce o quince años en silencio y replicó sólo hacia el 380; al año o poco más de la muerte de San Basilio, ocurrida en enero del 379.

4 Aunque se trata de algo obvio, quizá no esté del todo fuera de lugar señalar que empleamos aquí, como antes y en lo sucesivo, los vocablos “sofística” y “sofista” en el sentido peyorativo que tienen a partir de Sócrates y Platón. Si se los interpreta como equivalentes a estilo literario y procedimiento argumentativo de carácter retórico –uso que estaba todavía vigente en el siglo IV– entonces Gregorio de Nisa no hubiera tenido nada que oponerles: mejor dicho él mismo hubiera podido calificarse sofista, ya que se formó en la retórica de su tiempo y usó ampliamente de ella, como fue puesto de relieve, ya a principios de siglo, por L. Méridier, *L'influence de la seconde sophistique sur l'œuvre de Grégoire de Nysse*, Rennes 1906.

5 CE I 11–12 (GNO I, 25–26).

la verdad, pero, de hecho, apostilla Gregorio, su empeño se vuelca y reduce a “inepcias de figuras y de palabras, sin utilidad alguna”⁶.

No es la verbosidad del estilo, la mera desproporción entre forma y fondo, lo que Gregorio critica en Eunomio, sino más bien el hecho de que ese exceso de palabras y esa hipertrofia de imágenes y figuras esté buscada para distraer al lector, disimulando la fragilidad de las argumentaciones, hasta conseguir que, embelesado por lo exuberante de la expresión, termine apartándose de la verdad⁷.

El Niseno atribuye, en suma, y ya desde el exordio, a Eunomio la actitud manipuladora propia del sofista, aunque no emplee aquí expresamente ese vocablo⁸; a la par que sienta un principio expositivo-literario: la retórica no debe ser abigarrada ni demasiado exuberante y, en todo caso, ha de estar no por encima de la verdad sino a su servicio. De ahí un consejo que enuncia, remitiendo por lo demás a la autoridad del Apóstol Pablo: “prestar atención sólo a la verdad”. Ese y no otro debe ser el ornato de todo discurso sincero y honrado, que tenderá por tanto a ser sencilla, claro, transparente incluso en la expresión. A quien le falte la verdad le resultará tal vez necesario “disimular la mentira con la belleza de la expresión”: sólo así, es decir, escondido bajo apariencias que deslumbran, puede el error agradar a alguien. En cambio, “cuando es la misma verdad, pura y sin contaminación alguna, lo que constituye el objeto de nuestra palabra, entonces el discurso brilla con una belleza propia y originaria”⁹.

La verdad posee una belleza y por tanto una fuerza de convicción propias, aptas de por sí para atraer la inteligencia y el corazón, ya que, en ella, en la verdad, radica el fundamento, el valor que dota de sentido al existir. Hay, por tanto, que dejar a la verdad que hable por sí misma. No es el artificio literario lo que debe mover a la inteligencia sino la verdad. La retórica, la pulcritud del estilo, la capacidad figurativa y de evocación han de estar al servicio de la verdad; no han de aspirar a otra cosa que a hacer patente la verdad, a situarla ante el ánimo de quienes escuchan, para que éstos puedan dejarse ganar e iluminar por ella. Actuar de otra forma es dudar de la fuerza de la verdad o, peor aún, apartarse de ella, ocultarla, para ofrecer en su lugar la mentira. En suma, dominar al otro con la palabra y esclavizarle al propio parecer; caer en la sofística, negación radical de la auténtica filosofía –amor a la verdad– y, por tanto, destrucción no sólo de

6 CE I 15 (GNO I, 26–27).

7 Ver también los pasajes de la semblanza biográfica de Eunomio en los que éste es presentado como hombre experto en el “arte de atraerse los afectos”, aun a costa de halagar las pasiones: CE I 49–54 (GNO I, 39–40).

8 Lo hace en otros lugares de la obra: cf. CE I 111; 549–551 (GNO I, 60 y 185–186).

9 CE I 18 (GNO I, 27–28).

la comunicación interpersonal, sino también de la propia y personal riqueza, porque el sofista no sólo engaña a los otros, sino que se engaña también a sí mismo, alejándose de la verdad a la vez que aparta a los demás de ella.

Verdad y comunión eclesial

Pero, en su polémica con Eunomio, Gregorio de Nisa no habla de la verdad en general o en abstracto, sino de la verdad cristiana: de la verdad manifestada por Dios en la historia y llegada hasta nosotros en la predicación y el vivir de la Iglesia. La sofística como mentira y alejamiento de la verdad implica, en este contexto, también e inseparablemente, apartamiento de la Iglesia, ruptura de la comunión. Así lo expresa en un denso y largo texto de la *Refutación de la confesión de Eunomio* que merece la pena al menos resumir. La fe de los cristianos –declara en él San Gregorio– “no proviene de hombre ni por medio de hombres”, sino de Cristo, logos, vida, luz y verdad de Dios. Esa fe ha sido conservada a lo largo de los siglos “pura e irreproachable como la hemos recibido”, sin introducir en ella “ninguna sustracción, ningún cambio, ninguna adición”, “sabiendo muy bien y con esto llegamos al punto que ahora nos interesa que quien tiene la osadía de desnaturalizar la palabra divina por medio de una perversa operación sofística, ése es hijo de su padre el diablo; quien abandona las palabras de la verdad, habla de lo propio, convirtiéndose en padre de la mentira. Pues todo lo que se dice al margen de la verdad es completamente falso y no verdadero”¹⁰.

Repetidas veces, en las páginas iniciales del *Contra Eunomio*, Gregorio de Nisa describe la obra de Eunomio –o la de su predecesor Aecio– como un intento de acuñar y difundir novedades¹¹. El Niseno –como tantos otros que, antes o después de él, se han hecho eco de la recomendación contenida en la carta a Timoteo¹²– no ha pretendido excluir toda creatividad en el pensar cristiano, ni toda referencia y recurso a la razón, a la capacidad natural de conocer a lo aportado por la inteligencia humana a lo largo de la historia. Al contrario proclama la legitimidad de una y otra cosa, advirtiendo a la vez que la creatividad puede tener lugar sólo en el interior de la fe, es decir, como profundización progresiva en la ilimitada riqueza de la palabra divina y a la luz de cuanto esa palabra nos ha dado a conocer¹³.

¹⁰ *Ref Eun* 2 (GNO II, 312–313).

¹¹ *CE* I 38; 46–47 (GNO I, 35; 37–38).

¹² *1 Tim* 6, 20.

¹³ Sobre este punto, una buena exposición sintética en L.F. Mateo-Seco, “El uso de la Filosofía en Teología según San Gregorio de Nisa”, en AA.VV., *El método en teología. Actas del I Simpo-*

Proceder sofísticamente no consiste, según Platón, en confiar en la razón, cuyo valor nadie niega, sino en cerrarse a la verdad, volviéndole las espaldas, lo que implica que, a partir de ese momento, la razón gira en vacío, viviendo a expensas de la verdad que precedentemente pueda haber percibido pero a costa de destruirla de forma paulatina y cada vez más radical. Lo mismo significa en Gregorio, sólo que el obispo de Nisa sabe que hay una verdad superior a aquella que el hombre alcanza con su sola inteligencia: la que Dios ha manifestado con su palabra. Proceder sofísticamente, dar origen a esa “perversa operación sofística” de que habla el texto de la *Refutación de la confesión de Eunomio*, es cerrarse a la verdad divina, bien negándola por entero, bien poniendo en duda su valor supremo, con cuanto de ahí deriva. Desde el instante mismo en que tiene lugar esa quiebra de la fe, esa ruptura de la comunión con la tradición eclesial y con la verdad que esa tradición trasmite, la razón comienza a funcionar, también aquí, como fuerza destructiva: se habla ya no de lo común –de la verdad divina poseída por el entero cuerpo eclesial– sino “de lo propio”; no se recibe dócil, amorosa e íntegramente la palabra de Dios sino que se intenta acomodarla a los estrechos límites de la propia comprensión subjetiva, y en consecuencia se la tergiversa y deforma. En suma, se engendra la mentira, porque como subraya ese mismo texto “todo lo que se dice al margen de la verdad es completamente falso y no verdadero”.

El sofista –que, desde esta perspectiva, se identifica con el hereje dando a la palabra todo su sentido originario de separación y aislamiento–, priva a los demás y se priva a sí mismo de la verdad plena, radical y última respecto a Dios, al hombre y al mundo, que otorga la fe cristiana. Su pensar es, por tanto, y aun en el supuesto de que su ingenio y su erudición sean grande, un pensar incierto, carente del vigor que otorga la verdad plena; más aún, un pensar que transmite no vida, sino vacío, nihilismo y muerte.

Lo que Gregorio condena no es la razón, sino –al igual que Platón– la razón ratiocinante, la razón que pretende funcionar sin estar fecundada y alimentada por la verdad. Por eso su denuncia de la “operación sofística” no desemboca en una crítica de la inteligencia y en una apología de la pura piedad, sino más bien en una alabanza del pensar que se realiza concordemente con “la intención

sio de Teología Histórica, Valencia, 1981, 95–106; algunas de interés en J. Daniélou, “Grégoire de Nysse et la philosophie”, en: H. Dörrie–M. Altenburger–U. Schramm (eds.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites Internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1970, 3–18, y en E. Mühlberg, “Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in der Büchern ‘Contra Eunomium’”, en: M. Harl, *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 230 ss.

de las Escrituras” en las que se contiene la Palabra de Dios, criterio supremo de verdad y guía seguro de nuestra razón¹⁴. El sofista se cierra a la verdad y la manipula. El filósofo, amante de la sabiduría, amante de la verdad, se abre a ella, se alimenta de ella, venga de donde viniere. Por eso el pensar del filósofo, a diferencia del pensar del sofista, es un pensar auténtico, fuerte, dotado de contenido, capaz de vivificar. Tanto más si lleva su filosofía, su amor a la verdad, hasta la aceptación de la verdad que Dios revela, porque entonces habla con la fuerza y la firmeza propia de Dios, como lo subraya Gregorio en uno de los párrafos más significativos del exordio; aquél en el que explica por qué asume, él precisamente, la tarea de replicar al ataque dirigido por Eunomio a su hermano Basilio. Me obliga a ello –comenta– la ley de la fraternidad, aunque me reconozco –añade– “el más pequeño de los que se cuentan en el número de los fieles”. Pero –subraya enseguida– “en modo alguno soy más débil que aquellos que se han separado de la Iglesia y han dado su nombre a sectas adversas. Porque en un cuerpo sano el más pequeño de los miembros, es, gracias a la conjunción con el todo, más robusto y fuerte, que los miembros corrompidos y separadas, aunque éstos puedan ser más grandes, y aquél más pequeño”¹⁵.

La “conjunción con el todo”, la comunión con el cuerpo eclesial, trae consigo firmeza, fuerza, capacidad de convicción, y ello, ante todo y sobre todo, por que implica comunión con la verdad. Reencontramos aquí la misma consideración de fondo aparecida en el apartado anterior: la verdad posee fuerza y belleza por sí misma, es a ella a la que hay que dejar hablar en toda disputa intelectual, lo que, en el terreno de la verdad cristiana, implica y reclama dejar hablar a la verdad que la Iglesia posee y en virtud de la cual el creyente resulta dotado de fuerza y de razón. Quién está en comunión con la Iglesia habla, en efecto, de la verdad; mejor dicho, es entonces cuando la verdad habla a través de él, haciéndole participe de su vigor.

Es obvio que, en toda esta reflexión, la “conjunción con el todo”, la unión con la comunidad eclesiástica, es vista desde la perspectiva de la participación con la verdad, aunque sin excluir los otros aspectos de la comunión, más aún connotándolos, como manifiestan otros textos del Niseno, también en el exordio del *Contra Eunomio*. No podía ser de otra manera, ya que sin la dimensión unitiva plena, sin el amor, es imposible la comunión. Más aún ese espíritu repercute sobre la actitud misma con que se aborda el diálogo intelectual, tam-

14 *An et res* (GNO III/3 33). El adverbio “concordemente”, que hemos empleado en nuestro texto, intenta traducir la voz “sinfonía” que, en forma verbal, aparece en el texto del Niseno al que remitimos; sobre el término “sinfonía” y su importancia en Gregorio de Nisa, ver J. Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970, 51–74.

15 *CE I 10* (GNO I, 25).

bién cuando versa con personas que están alejadas de la verdad, e incluso la combaten: una verdad que es amor –como es el caso de la verdad cristiana– no aspira a derrotar al adversario, sino a reencontrarse ambos en comunión con Dios, Verdad y Amor supremos. Tal fue, comenta Gregorio, la actitud de Basilio al escribir su crítica a la primera apología de Eunomio: actuó movido por una abundancia de amor al hombre (*filantropía*), no con otro fin, al combatir la herejía, que “el de sanar al hombre y, una vez sanado, restituirlo a la Iglesia”, es decir a la unión con Dios y a la fraternidad de la comunidad cristiana¹⁶. El actuar del sofista manipula, divide, aísla, separa. El del filósofo une en la verdad a que todos se ordenan y con la que todos comunican. Si ese amante de la sabiduría, si ese filósofo, es un cristiano, la unión percibida y buscada es aún más profunda, porque es unión con la Verdad que es Dios mismo, comunión trinitaria de Personas en la que el hombre es llamado a participar.

Y con esta consideración podemos cerrar nuestro análisis y sentar la conclusión ya apuntada al principio: la denuncia de la sofística y la vindicación de la filosofía realizadas por Sócrates y por Platón se mantienen enteras en Gregorio de Nisa, ampliadas y modificadas, por ese enriquecimiento del concepto mismo de verdad que trae consigo la revelación cristiana.

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16 CE I 4 (GNO I, 23).

Dogmatics and Politics in Gregory of Nyssa: Monarchy, Democracy, Kingship, Tyranny & Anarchy in the *Against Eunomius*

Constantine Bozinis

If we are to believe modern historians, who with one voice assure us of the fundamental significance that Christian doctrine acquired in the Late Antique society, then Gregory of Nyssa's *Against Eunomius*, to which the present essay is dedicated, must surely have been a best-seller in its day. The themes discussed therein and the rhetorical renown of its author, combined with his reputation as a champion of Nicaean Orthodoxy—which from 379AD held sway in the political foreground with the ascension of Theodosius the Great to the throne—guaranteed its successful reception among the educated classes of the Empire's population.¹ Gregory himself, moreover, does not hide his aspirations that the treatise he is writing against Eunomius reach out to as wide an audience as possible. It is clear from even a cursory reading of the text that Gregory employs every expressive means at his disposal among the arsenal of ancient rhetoric (*oxymōron*, *prosōpopoeia*, *hyperbole*, *psogos*, *exclamatio*, *ironia*, etc.) in order that the refutation of his opponent's positions acquire the character of a lively, personal dialogue that, by means of its emotional tension and unexpected turns, will capture his readers' interest and hold it undiminished.² And, despite the arcane and recondite analyses of the relationship between the Father and the Son, which unavoidably filled the pages of a polemic dogmatic treatise of the 4th century AD, the conclusions at which Gregory invariably arrives are simple and are imprinted with power and clarity in our minds. They are, moreover, restated again and again in different ways throughout the

1 The *Against Eunomius* was written between 381 and 383AD, that is at the same time that the Second Ecumenical Council confirmed the *homoousion* of the Son with the Father. The victory of Orthodoxy over Arianism opened the way as well for Gregory's own personal recognition as the new rhetorical star over the sky of Constantinople. The funeral orations that he gave in honor of Pulcheria and Flaccilla, the wife and daughter of Theodosius the Great respectively, attest to his status at this time. See A. Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa, The Early Church Fathers*, London-New York 1999, 4–5.

2 For Gregory's rhetorical instruction see P. Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysse: Lettres*, SC 363, 43–50. Also, L. Méridier, *L'influence de la seconde sophistique sur l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nysse*, Rennes 1906, *passim*.

extent of this voluminous work, such that they may penetrate the soul of even the most simpleminded of Christians, who would feel utterly helpless in the face of the abstract philosophical concepts being discussed in relation to the essence of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Especially significant was the fact that Eunomius' teaching constituted blasphemy against the Son of God inasmuch as it stripped him of his divine status and, demoting him to the level of a creature, rendered him equal to the lowest organisms of the animal kingdom: insects, vermin, flies and ants.³ Moreover, behind its pious façade it began to pervert the physiognomy of Christianity, throwing open the doors to idolatry through its demand to worship a creature.⁴ Finally, it forced the Church into a humiliating confession of its defeat at the hands of Judaism and of the superiority of the Old to the New Testament. "What is the reason for all of this intricate embellishment of expression with which he (Eunomius) presents to us the utter distinction in nature between the Father and the Son," Gregory asks at one point in his treatise. "Let him tell us clearly that we should not confess in the name of the Son, neither should the Only-Begotten God be preached in the churches, but let us finally accept that Jewish worship is higher than the Christian confession of faith. Thus, confessing the Father as the only creator and fashioner, let us conceive of everything else both essentially and in name as members of creation. And indeed, along with everything else, let us also name 'creature' the very first work of God, inasmuch as he was created by some creative energy of his, and instead of 'Only-Begotten God' and 'true Son', let us address him as 'First-Created' in our prayers."⁵ Even beyond Eunomius' glaring errors at the theoretical level, what Gregory is mostly interested in highlighting, by means of his rhetorical skill, is the opposition of Neo-Arianism to the people's instinctual sentiment of piety towards the person of Jesus Christ. This, of course, confirms again, from a different angle, the wide spectrum of readers to whom Gregory is addressing his *Against Eunomius*.⁶

3 CE III/1 20–21 (GNO II, 10,11–25); CE III/2 129–131 (94,18–95,11); CE III/2 154–155 (102,17–103,4).

4 CE II 433–435 (GNO I, 353,1–23); CE III/2 72–73 (GNO II, 75,23–76,7); CE III/2 131–135 (94,28–96,17); CE III/2 163–164 (105,22–106,9); CE III/3 3–4 (107,20–108,21); CE III/6 5–9 (187,16–189,3); CE III/8 19–20 (245,15–246,3); CE III/9 57–60 (285,17–286,30) etc.

5 CE III/2 156 (GNO II, 103,5–16). Likewise CE I 177–179 (GNO I, 79,9–27); CE I 262–266 (103,8–104,15); CE II 14–15 (230,30–231,11); CE II 241 (296,25–297,2); CE III/7 8–9 (GNO II 217,17–218,5); CE III/7 38 (228, 25–27); CE III/8 21–23 (246,17–247,13); CE III/9 31 (275,22–28). All quotations from ancient Greek authors or Fathers of the Church present our translation, unless otherwise indicated. Quotations from the Holy Scripture are taken from the NRSV, with slight differentiation where needed for the interpretation of the passage.

6 If not directly, at least indirectly, the recipient of Gregory's treatise is the Church's entire flock.

From this perspective, we should not be surprised by the various political terms dispersed throughout Gregory's treatise. As with his metaphors, paraphrases from Attic orators and tragic poets, or references to Greek mythology, these all contribute to a rhetorical variety that is pleasing to the ears of a public sensitive to the value of classical education, and they afford the *Against Eunomius* its especial quality as a literary text. However, their role is not simply decorative. They simultaneously serve the needs of proving the correctness of Orthodox doctrine, while broadening the horizons of the problematization concerning the *homoousion*, as we shall see in the course of the analysis that follows below.



An interesting passage, in which we observe an unusually prominent collection of political terminology from Antiquity, occurs in the beginning of the third book of the *Against Eunomius*. It is in this passage that Gregory criticizes the literal interpretation of a certain verse from the book of *Proverbs*, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago" (8:22). This verse, even from the earliest years among the Arian camp, that is from the beginning of the 4th century, was taken as an indisputable testimony from Holy Scripture concerning the ontological distinction between the Son and the Father.⁷ This verse, which as is known is proclaimed from the lips of Wisdom personified, has a deeper meaning in Gregory's eyes, a meaning which cannot be understood from a superficial and peripheral reading of Solomon's text. The

The positions which he maintains concerning the nature of the Threefold God will echo from the ambo of every church throughout the entire extent of the Roman Empire, where Orthodox bishops and priests preside, until even the last faithful Christian in the *Imperium* hears them. Thus, even if we accept that the better-educated, senior clergy basically constitute the target audience of the *Against Eunomius*, through them the ideas contained therein will be disseminated throughout the wider multitude of Christians, who listen to sermons during the course of the Divine Liturgy. However, even beyond the confines of the Church, dogmatic controversies generally tended to occupy public opinion during Late Antiquity, drawing into their maelstrom even portions of the population who had not yet embraced the new religion. Gregory himself offers us an incontrovertible proof of this in his *On the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit* ([GNO X/2 120,17–121,14]). Cf. R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (AD 100–400)*, New Haven-London 1984, 63–64 and 66–67.

7 A. Grillmeier calls it characteristically "the chief passage of the Arians", see Id., *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1 (*From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon [451]*), London-Oxford 1975, 174, n. 29. It is indicative of the weight that the heretics gave it that Athanasius' second oration *Against Arians* is devoted almost exclusively to its exegesis (18–82 [PG 26, 184c ff.]).

entire book of *Proverbs* is characterized, in Gregory's view, by its obscure character that compels whomever would draw upon the riches of wisdom hidden therein to take refuge in the hermeneutical method most suitable for understanding Holy Scripture, indeed that proposed by Paul himself, namely allegory (*Gal* 4:21–31).⁸ In order to prove his thesis, Gregory cites two other verses from *Proverbs* that, if taken literally, lead to a logical dead-end. Wisdom is presented here, as in the controversial verse 8:22, as a personified entity, and she proclaims to humanity that with her aid, "kings reign, and rulers decree what is just (...) and tyrants rule over the earth" (8:15–16).⁹ However, is it possible at any time that all kings without exception, even tyrants, govern their subjects with wisdom? If such were the case, the most inhumane and brutal regimes would have to have had wisdom as their foundation, which certainly goes against any logic whatsoever. Thus, the words "kings" and "rulers" must be interpreted allegorically, beyond the conventional significances to which they are usually assigned.¹⁰ Both words are used equally in reference to Christians, who with the aid of wisdom gain the kingdom of heaven, indestructible to the ages of ages, remaining unconquered by the "dynasty of sin" (δυναστεία τῆς ἀμαρτίας). Jesus' words from the *Sermon on the Mount*, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Mt* 5:3) confirm for the Cappadocian father the above allegorical interpretation, illuminating the imperceptible web of symbolisms that imbue as a whole the collection of *Proverbs* in the Old Testament.¹¹ Even the legislative tasks (γράφειν δικαιοσύνην), which in Solomon's *Proverbs* are assigned to the rulers of the people (δυνάσται), in reality refer to the faithful of the Church, as we read in the *Against Eunomius*: each faithful Christian establishes in the conscience of the surrounding community, by means of his own personal example, the standards of virtue and justice.¹² Within the same framework of allegorical interpretation is revealed to us the deeper meaning contained within the association of tyranny with wisdom in Solomon's text.

8 CE III/1 25 (GNO II, 12,11–20).

9 ... φησὶ δὲ [ἡ σοφία] δι' ἐαυτῆς βασιλεύειν τοὺς βασιλεύοντας, καὶ δικαιοσύνην γράφειν τοὺς δυναστεύοντας καὶ τῆς ἐαυτῶν κατακρατεῖν γῆς τοὺς τύραννους (CE III/1 28 [GNO II, 13,18–14,2]).

10 CE III/1 29 (GNO II, 14,3–10).

11 CE III/1 30 (GNO II, 14,10–17).

12 He constitutes, in other words, in the eyes of those around him, a *lex animata*, higher than any current justice or law. For this royal title, the christianization of which we perceive already in the epistolography of the New Testament (1 *Tim* 1:9), see F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy (Origins and Background)*, vol. 1, DOS 9, Washington 1966, 245–277.

“Thus, the praiseworthy tyranny, by means of its alliance with wisdom, having transformed the democracy of the passions into a monarchy of the intellect, enslaves all those that wickedly run loose towards licence, that is all bodily and earthly thoughts,” Gregory states at one point, in order to then strengthen his arguments with a paraphrase from Paul’s *Epistle to the Galatians*: “For the flesh engenders desires contrary to the spirit and it rises up in rebellion against the rule of the soul” (5:17).¹³ With the parallel readings of the Old and New Testaments, as prescribed by the allegorical method, the mystery is easily solved: the tyranny, which the legendary king of Israel mentions in his proverbs, is completely unrelated to civic life, palaces and empires. It refers to the human soul and outlines its ideal constitution: when the intellect takes action and reins in the licence of the irrational and instinctual urges of the body, subjecting them to its authority as absolute monarch!¹⁴

The wealth offered by the above passage from the *Against Eunomius* is immense; its meticulous examination would demand the entire space of our essay. Let us limit ourselves, then, to certain key observations. Despite his guileless faith in the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and his invocation of both Jesus’ and Paul’s authority, the interpretation of *Proverbs* that Gregory offers us bears manifest characteristics of ancient Greek thought. The ideal constitution of the soul, which Gregory defines for us in contradistinction to the “democracy of the passions”, like a “monarchy of the rational powers of the human person” is associated only indirectly, if at all, with either Jewish wisdom literature or the apostolic preaching of the New Testament.¹⁵ It is quite simply a basic, philosophical motif that has its roots in the Platonic dialogue *Republic*. There for the first time we see the development of a novel philosophical question concerning the cause-and-effect relationship between politics and the human

13 Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἐπαινετὴ τυραννὶς τῇ συμμαχίᾳ τῆς σοφίας τὴν τῶν παθῶν δημοκρατίαν εἰς τὴν τοῦ νοῦ μοναρχίαν μετασκευάσασα δουλαγωγεῖ τὰ κακῶς εἰς ἐλευθερίαν ἀφηνιάζοντα, πάντα τὰ σωματικά τε καὶ γήινα λέγω φρονήματα. Ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ τῇ ἀρχῇ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπανίσταται (CE III/1 31 [GNO II, 14,17–22]).

14 It is worth mentioning that Gregory connects in the same passage the “monarchy” or “tyranny of the intellect” with the primeval state of Adam, before original sin and his subsequent corruption. At that time, Gregory writes, the flesh complied fully with the desires of the soul, just as a country or kingdom with the commands of a ruler (CE III/1 31 [GNO II, 14,23–24]). Cf. *Op hom.* XII (PG 44, 161C–164C); XVIII (192C–193D). For the positive connotations that the term tyranny acquires in Gregory, see below, n. 20 on p. 276.

15 See Paul’s proclamation in his *Epistle to the Philippians*: “But our citizenship is in heaven” (3:20) and its analysis by T. Engberg-Pederson, “Stoicism in Philippians”, in: Id., *Paul in his Hellenistic Context*, Edinburgh 1994, 256–290. Cf. Jewish literature in 4 *Macc.* 1:13–30; 2:22–23; 15:1; *Sap.* 9:15.

soul. Political events, in accordance with Plato, are directly dependent upon processes that take place silently, deep within the soul. With perspicacity the philosopher observes that a city is not constructed from “wood and cement”, but from the people themselves who inhabit it, and whose devotion to either virtue or wickedness exercises a decisive impact upon its civic life.¹⁶ Based upon the above axiom, Plato progresses on to an extensive analysis of the analogies manifested between the city and the soul, which analysis reaches its climax in the discovery of the identical three-part structure of each: the three classes of the former (guardians [φύλακες], auxiliaries [ἐπίκουροι], workers [δημιουργοί]) correspond to the three portions of the latter, which—also for the first time in Plato’s *Republic*—are identified as rational (λογιστικόν), passionate (θυμοειδές), and desirous (ἐπιθυμητικόν).¹⁷ However, on the other hand, inasmuch as a just rule of law within the city is determined for the most part by its citizens’ constitution—that is to say, that portion that correlates to each of the three classes within its distribution of authority—in the same way the virtue of the soul is a dependency of the mutual relationships of authority and submission among its three portions. These relationships form its constitution. Plato indeed even reaches the point of claiming that as many different forms of civic government as have appeared throughout the course of human history, just as many are the forms that the internal articulation of the human soul can take.¹⁸ Within each human person a never-ending war is being waged, leading, in accordance with that portion of the soul that takes authority and imposes its rule, to the establishment of one or another form of civic government: kingdom, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, or tyranny.¹⁹

We can clearly discern the echo of this same philosophical reflection, as developed by Socrates and his fellow interlocutors in the Platonic *Republic*,

16 *Resp.* VIII 544d–e.

17 *Ibid.* IV 441c–445b. In the *Phaedo*, which was written close to the same time as the *Republic*, Plato views the soul as a unified entity and accounts for its various passions by reference to the negative influence of the body (64a–69e). The simplicity of the soul is in the same dialogue one of the arguments used as evidence of its immortality and its likeness with the Forms, see H. Görgemanns, *Platon*, Heidelberger Studienhefte zur Altertumswissenschaft, Heidelberg 1994, 136–138.

18 See *Resp.* IV 445c–d: “Ὅσοι, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, πολιτειῶν τρόποι εἰσὶν εἶδη ἔχοντες, τοσούτοι κινδυνεύουσι καὶ ψυχῆς τρόποι εἶναι. -Πόσοι δὴ; -Πέντε μὲν (...) πολιτειῶν, πέντε δὲ ψυχῆς.

19 *Ibid.* VIII 543d–544e. The soul’s constitution essentially determines even the way in which the state will be governed: if the authority will be in the hands of the crowd, the few, or the one. See further R.W. Hall, *Plato*, Political Thinkers 9, London-Boston-Sydney 1981, 54–80, amidst a rich bibliography on the topic.

in the passage from the *Against Eunomius* that we earlier examined. The likeness between Plato's thought and Gregory's interpretation of the verses from *Proverbs* 8:15–16 is rather too conspicuous to be overlooked. In addition, Gregory's view of the ideal constitution of the soul does not differ from Plato's. As we follow his thought closely, we see that he exhorts the submission of the desirous and the passionate portions of the soul to the authority of the rational, and rejects without a second thought any human freedom to give in to the various passions, which would automatically transform the soul into a democracy.²⁰ Of course, the question that naturally arises in our minds, whether Gregory is philologically dependent upon Plato or is he drawing on some later author or a doxographic collection, cannot be answered with absolute surety. From the 2nd century onwards, the interest kindled around the Platonic *Republic* overflows into an abundance of literary sources that only increase in number as we approach the Middle Ages. The transferal of political phenomena to the inner realm of the human soul constitutes a standard approach in intellectual treatises of Late Antiquity. In order to explain, for example, the corruption that the soul undergoes from its continual occupation with the body's needs, Plotinus likens the conditions that take over within the soul to a gathering of the municipal Ecclesia, where the voice of the one who offers the best solutions is drowned out by the loud noises and howling of the savage crowd.²¹ Moreover, in true Platonic fashion, in his fourth *Ennead* he establishes a hierarchy of the different types of people, in accordance with the constitution that each embodies in his own personal life. At the apex of the pyramid, of course, is that one in whose soul, "the ruling principle is one, and the order comes from this to the

20 The identification of tyranny with the ideal form of government for the soul is of course peculiar and does not agree with the Platonic distinction between forms of government. For Gregory this identification occurs out of necessity, from the marriage of tyranny with wisdom in the book of *Proverbs*. Moreover, despite the negative connotations with which it is usually associated in the ancient sources, it was possible that tyranny be perceived in a positive light. During the archaic period, Hellenism bore witness to citizens active in civic life, who amassed considerable political power, becoming tyrants, but nevertheless benefited their fellow citizens. Indeed, certain few, such as Periander, Peisistratus or Pittacus acquired such renown that they were later even included among the seven wise men of antiquity. See Diogenes Laertius' narrative in the first book of his *Lives* (I, 45 ff.) with the interpretations of J. Althoff—D. Zeller, *Die Worte der Sieben Weisen*, TzF 89, Darmstadt 2006, 19–24.

21 Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 4, 17 (19–27). Cf. *ibid.* VI 4, 15 (18–35). More specifically, for the significance of this image in the context of Plotinus' philosophical thought, see R.T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, Classical Life and Letters, London 1972, 72 ff., especially 76.

rest of the soul.”²² However, Synesius of Cyrene stands somewhat closer to Gregory than the founder of Neo-Platonism. At a certain point in his symbouleutic oration to emperor Arcadius he states: “Starting from here, I deem it necessary that the king, under the direction and rule of God, first be enthroned within his own soul as king, therein inaugurating monarchy.”²³ After he explains to the recipient of his oration the composite nature of the soul, as it is divided into different parts, he adds: “But you perceive (o, king) that therein exists male, female, brave and coward, and in general all manner of things that are opposed to each other. Therein is also the intermediate nature in between all things, which we call intellect—that very thing that I say must rule in the soul of the king once it has deposed the ochlocracy and democracy of the passions.”²⁴ It is almost as if we are hearing Gregory himself speaking to us. Nevertheless, it is not within a dogmatic treatise concerning the essence of the Father and the Son that such sentiments are expressed in favor of the dissolving of the democracy of the passions within the human soul. Rather, they constitute the subject of a symbouleutic oration that is considered, together with Eusebius’ *Tricennial Oration*, the cornerstone of Byzantine political philosophy.²⁵



Gregory’s use of political terminology is not limited exclusively to one section of the *Against Eunomius*. As we continue to read his treatise against the bishop of Cyzicus, our attention begins to be drawn by yet another verse, in which democracy once again emerges from the text. This time, however, it is not associated with the constitution of a soul enslaved to its passions; Gre-

22 ... ἐν τῷ ἄρχον, καὶ παρὰ τούτου εἰς τὰ ἄλλα ἡ τάξις (op. cit. IV 4, 17 [27–35]).

23 *De regn.* 6 (PG 66, 1069A).

24 ἀλλ’ ὁρᾷς [βασιλεῦ] ὥς ἐνι μὲν ἄρρεν ἐν τούτοις, ἐνὶ δὲ θήλυ, καὶ θαρραλέον τε καὶ δειλόν, ἐνὶ δὲ τὰ παντοδαπῶς ἀντικείμενα, ἐνὶ δὲ τις ἡ μέση διὰ πάντων φύσις, ἣν νοῦν καλοῦμεν, ὃν ἀξιῶ βασιλεύειν ἐν τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως ψυχῇ, τὴν ὀχλοκρατίαν τε καὶ δημοκρατίαν τῶν παθῶν καταλύσαντα (ibid. 6 [1069AB]).

25 See H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, vol. 1 (*Philosophie, Rhetorik, Epistolographie, Geschichtsschreibung, Geographie*), München 1978, 157, who characterizes Synesius’ *On Kingship* as, “den ältesten byzantinischen Fürstenspiegel.” Likewise, W. Blum, *Byzantinische Fürstenspiegel (Agapetos, Theophylakt von Orchid, Thomas Magister)*, BGrL 14, Stuttgart 1981, 31 and K. Paidas, *Τα βυζαντινά κάτοπτρα ηγεμόνος της πρώτης και μέσης περιόδου (398–1085). Συμβολή στην πολιτική θεωρία των Βυζαντινών*, Athen 2005, 20 et al. For a comprehensive exposition of Synesius’ political ideas, which are repeated as models by the byzantine intellectual elite up to the end of the Paleologan period, see F. Dvornik, *Political Philosophy* 11, 699–705.

gory has altered the content of the term significantly, following the rhetorical developments of his argument. The second time that the term democracy appears in the *Against Eunomius* is in the introduction to the third section of Book III, where Gregory of Nyssa challenges the reader to imagine what the consequences would be if the enemies of the *homoousion* should have a victory.²⁶ If their view should hold sway then the Son would be seen as one of the creations of the Father; thus the Church would find herself face to face with a serious dilemma. Either she would have to stop worshipping him in order to remain faithful to the monotheistic spirit of the Old and New Testaments, or, out of shame at the divine majesty that pours forth from the wondrous miracles recorded in the Gospel, she would have to approve—as indeed Eunomius advises—that the Son be worshipped as a lower god, fashioned by the creative power of the Father.²⁷ However, in the event that divine honors are bestowed upon a creature within the Church, then the Christian faith would gradually degenerate, in Gregory's eyes, into idolatry. "And if this view should prevail, surely then the doctrines of piety will be changed into some kind of general anarchy and democratic autonomy,"²⁸ Gregory writes—an opinion which he justifies in the following manner: "As soon as people are convinced that it is not simply one nature to which they owe religious reverence, but they begin to imagine various divinities in their minds, there will no longer be anything to keep them from extending divinity throughout all of creation. The one creation that they will believe in as a god will prove an occasion to attribute divine honors to the very next creation, which will in its turn provoke yet another creature to be divinized. This will continue until their delusion surpasses all bounds, and in the end they will be deceived in relation to everything."²⁹ The

26 Gregory's alarmism, as we shall see below, is intended to demonstrate the incompatibility of the apostolic faith with Arianism, in view of the discussion of the verse from *Acts* 2:36. "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." This verse, along with *Proverbs* 8:22 was throughout the 4th century at the center of the conflicts between the heretics and the Orthodox. See *CE III/3* 1 (GNO II, 107,1–9); *CE III/3* 12–69 (GNO II, 111,1 ff.) and for the hermeneutical background of the verse from *Acts* during the 4th century, Athanasius the Great, *Adv. Arian.* II 11–17 (PG 26, 169B–184A); Basil the Great, *Adv. Eun.* II 2–4 (SC 305, 12–18); Epiphanius, *Pan.* LXIX 42, 1–9 (GCS Epiph. III, 189,22–190,29); Marcellus of Ancyra, *De incar. et c. Ar.* 21 (PG 26, 1021A–B).

27 *CE III/3* 3 (GNO II, 107,20–108,11).

28 Καὶ εἰ τοῦτο κρατήσῃεν εἰς ἀναρχίαν τινὰ πάντα καὶ δημοκρατικὴν αὐτονομίαν τὰ δόγματα τῆς εὐσεβείας μετενεχθήσεται (*CE III/3* 3 [GNO II, 108,11–13]).

29 *CE III/3* 4 (GNO II, 108,13–21).

innumerable host of pagan gods offers to Gregory the most suitable example for demonstrating what the result will be if Christian worship undergoes the process of democratization and a creature is worshipped alongside the Father, as Eunomius proposes. What is there in creation to which the pagans did not attribute divinity? The Egyptians first divinized the various monstrous forms with which the demons present themselves to humanity. Next, the Babylonians named the invariable revolution of the heavenly sphere as their god. Finally, the Greeks took for divinities the seven stars of heaven and, in addition to these, the ether and the air which spreads out underneath it, the sea and the earth, the inner core of the earth and everything generally on the earth that they deemed necessary for their lives.³⁰ The lack of a clear dividing line between uncreated (ἄκτιστον) and created (κτιστόν) led the Greeks, with whom Gregory closes his critique of paganism, to exalt to the realm of the divine everything within creation without exception. In this way they established in the heavens the very same political structure with which they had organized their communities on earth during the classical period, namely democracy!³¹

If, according to Plato, civic life is simply a reflection of the balance of power between the three portions of the soul—the rational, the passionate and the desirous—Gregory widens this interrelation between the inner and outer world of humanity in order to include yet another area of communal activity, unexamined by classical philosophy, namely religion. Aside from being simply a corrupt form of government at the depths of human existence, democracy has also demonstrated in the *Against Eunomius* the delusion that has cast its shadow over humanity for centuries before the incarnation of the Son of God; it is equated with idolatry. In contrast with the prevailing tendency today, that is for the acceptance of others and pluralism to be held as the highest standards of behavior for an individual and to be placed above ideologies and religious beliefs, Gregory condemns, as we see, unreservedly any deviation on the part of

30 CE III/3 5–7 (GNO II, 108,22–109,21).

31 As opposed to the metaphysical “democracy” of Hellenism, Gregory looks to the monotheism of the Old Testament, which is eloquently expressed by Isaiah with his prophetic proclamation, “I am the first and the last; besides me there is no god” (Is 44:6 in CE III/3 8 [GNO II, 110,1–5]). For the distinction κτιστόν–ἄκτιστον in Gregory of Nyssa, see A.A. Mosshammer, “The Created and the Uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa *Contra Eunomium* 1 270–295 (GNO I, 105–113)”, *vid. infra*, 384–411. For a more analytical approach to the same topic as seen within the general context of Gregory’s ontology, see T. Alexopoulos, *Το εἶναι κατά τη διδασκαλία του αγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης (Διερεύνηση της οντολογίας του καππαδόκη Πατέρα με συγκρητικές αναφορές στην νεοπλατωνική σκέψη του 3^{ου} αιώνα και τα αρεοπαγητικά έργα)*, Athens 2008, 159–215 and 319 ff.

the faithful from Orthodox doctrine. Democracy, within the context of religion, means for Gregory the dissolution of the natural hierarchy between uncreated and created, as well as the attribution of the privilege of worship to created things, which belongs exclusively to the creator. Moreover, as in politics also in the context of religion, a manufactured equality, imposed by a democratic government, hides within it the danger of anarchy (ἀναρχία). It conceals the hazard of divinizing undiscerningly everything that provokes humanity to fear or that constitutes a necessity of everyday life, just as Gregory states, reiterating almost verbatim the groundbreaking criticism of Prodicus and the other ancient sophists against the Olympian Pantheon.³² Thus, Plato's work does not suffice for us to understand the various semantic nuances that a political term such as democracy or anarchy acquires in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa. It is clear that Gregory is touching upon a different tradition, which—beyond its abundant Platonic elements—is mainly characterized by its enmity towards the polytheism of antiquity. And where else must we search for this tradition, if not within the context of the Jewish religion? There is of course a great temptation to interpret the political vocabulary that Gregory uses in relation to preceding patristic literature. We can perceive in the *Against Eunomius* without any difficulty the familiar polemical motif between Christianity and paganism: the identification of idolatry with a period of ethical decadence in humanity and gradual subjection to the base instincts and desires of the flesh. From the 2nd century AD until the Middle Ages, as is well known, Christian intellectuals unanimously denounced paganism, equating it with a sheer worshipping of human passions personified as immortal gods: Dionysus, Ares, Aphrodite and the other Olympians.³³ Indeed, for Eusebius of Caesarea, the dissolution of the pagan way of life is associated even further with the different forms of government under which people lived in the centuries before Christ—among which, of course, the democracy in Athens and the other city-states of ancient Greece

32 See W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Sophists*, Cambridge 1971, 290–296. The association of democracy with anarchy constitutes a familiar topos of political philosophy in Antiquity. See J. de Romilly, *Problèmes de la démocratie grecque*, Paris 1975, ch. 2 (“L’anarchie démocratique”) and, especially, 110 ff.

33 See characteristically Justin, 1 *Apol.* 25, 1–2 (PTS 38, 69); 2 *Apol.* 5, 3–6 (143–144); Tatian, *Or. ad Gr.*, 8, 2 (PTS 43, 19); Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 11 32, 1–33, 9 (SC 2^{bis}, 87–90); *ibid.* 11 39, 1–4 (95–96); *ibid.* IV 58, 3–61, 4 (122–125); *ibid.* X 102, 2–4 (170); Eusebius, *Or. de laud. Cons.* VII 3–4 (GCS Eus. I, 212, 26–213, 18); *ibid.* XIII 1–2 (235, 13–236, 3); Athanasius the Great, *C. gent.* 9 (SC 18^{bis}, 76, 22–78, 1); *ibid.* 25–26 (130, 15–134, 20); *De incarn.* 49, 3 (SC 199, 444, 16–17); John Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.* 18, 2 (PG 62, 693); *Hom. Rom.*, 16, 6 (PG 60, 440).

holds a conspicuous position.³⁴ With the aid of Eusebius' political theology, concerning which countless studies have been written over the past decades, the deeper conceptual link between the "democracy of the passions"—which we heard Gregory discuss above—and the "anarchy and democratic autonomy of the doctrines of piety"—which will touch upon the passage that concerns us now—truly begins to appear before our eyes.³⁵ Nevertheless, neither Eusebius of Caesarea, nor John Chrysostom, nor any other father of the Church in whose writings we detect the traces of metaphysical political theories, can claim this innovation as his own. They are all essentially inspired, just as Gregory, by a longstanding tradition that has its roots in the Jewish apologetics of the Diaspora, a tradition which is sealed by the personality of the greatest Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria.³⁶

In Philo we encounter for the first time a broad use of political terms to describe religious beliefs or practices. Specifically, he identifies polytheism with ochlocracy (ὀχλοκρατία), a form of government that, in the political vocabulary of antiquity, is equated with the corruption of democracy. For example, in his treatise *On the Creation of the Cosmos* Philo states that the goal of Moses' narrative of the creation of the world in the Old Testament is to teach us that there is only one god, thus coming into conflict with the devotees of polytheism, "who do not blush to transfer from earth to heaven ochlocracy, that worst of evil polities."³⁷ In his *On Virtues*, he again likens the converts to Judaism to political refugees who have come of their own volition to a city where law and order are respected "having left behind that most base of evil governments, ochlocracy."³⁸ Precisely the same corrupt government, which is not so different

34 A classic on this topic remains: E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum*, Leipzig 1935, 71–82, who was the first to turn the attention of researchers to the passages of Eusebean apologetics that comprise a "political theology": *Or. de laud. Cons.* XVI 2–4 (GCS Eus. I, 248,28–249,18); *Praep. ev.* I 4, 2–5 (GCS Eus. VIII/1, 14,16–16,7); *Dem. ev.*, III 7, 30–35 (GCS Eus. VI, 145,21–146,17); *ibid.* VII 2, 20–23 (331,30–332,23) etc.

35 Specifically, the abandoning of the worship of the one, true God for the sake of idolatry has an immediate effect on the microcosm of the human soul, namely the weakening of the intellect's authority and its eventual dethronement at the hands of the passions. Cf. *De vit. Mos.* II (GNO VII/1, 37,15–38,6); *In Cant. Cant.* V (GNO VI, 147,1–148,1).

36 The dependence of the fathers of the Church upon Philo is well known and has been shown many times by specialists. See, especilly, D.T. Runia, "Platonism, Philonism, and the Beginnings of Christian thought", in: Id., *Philo and the Church Fathers. A Collection of Papers*, Leiden-NewYork-Köln 1995, 1–24 with additional bibliography on the topic.

37 *Opif.* 171 (tr. Colson, LCL). Cf. *Fug.* 10–12.

38 See *Virt.* 180, where exactly the same expression is used to describe ochlocracy (= idolola-

from anarchy,³⁹ is established in the soul when the intellect, out of imprudence, “spurs and incites that other company, the company of the passions, to put their untutored nature under training and practice and thus render themselves resistless.”⁴⁰ And the ochlocracy that reigns within the lawless soul, subject to the passions, is not unrelated, in Philo’s eyes, to that which holds sway in the religious mores and customs of the pagan world. As we perceive from his allegorical interpretation of the Tower of Babel, the one constitutes an immediate extension or reflection, we would say, of the other.⁴¹ In contrast, Philo compares faith in the one, true god with monarchy. “Do not admit the name of other gods into thy soul to remember it, nor give expression to it with thy voice,” he exhorts the reader at one point, in order to add further on: “Keep both thy mind and thy speech far apart from these others, and turn to the Father and Maker of all, that thy conceptions of His sole sovereignty may be the best and the noblest, and thy words such as are suitable and most profitable to thyself and to them that shall hear thee.”⁴² Elsewhere he praises “the one ruler and king of the universe,” who drives oligarchy and ochlocracy out of heaven, “those mischievous forms of government (...) which arise among the vilest of men, produced by disorder and covetousness.”⁴³ In other passages, again, he emphasizes the importance of the Law of Moses, which he views as describing a monarchy, the constitution by which the universe is governed.⁴⁴

This tradition, springing from Philo, is indisputably the source behind Gregory’s use of political terminology in the beginning of the third section of the *Against Eunomius*, Book III. Just as Philo, Gregory presents idolatry as a radical democratic government that destroys the ontological distinction between creation and creator, while institutionalizing countless sacrifices and religious rites for the mob of divinities that constantly vie for position in the fantasy of the pagan world.⁴⁵ In addition, the fact that Gregory continues by contrasting

try) as in the above mentioned passage of *On the Creation of the Cosmos*: ἡ φαυλοτάτη τῶν κακοπολιτειῶν ὀχλοκρατία. Cf. *Agr.* 45.

39 *Agr.* 45–46; *Somn.* II 286.

40 *Conf.* 110: ἐπαίρει μέντοι καὶ παραθήγει καὶ τὸ ἄλλο ἀτίθασον ἐκ φύσεως τῶν παθῶν στίφος, ἵνα ἄσκησιν καὶ μελέτην προσλαβὼν ἀνύποιστον γένηται (tr. Colson, LCL). See also *Somn.* II 153–154; *Sacr.* 105–106; *Det.* 14; *Mos.* I 26.

41 *Conf.* 143–145. 196–198. Cf. *Virt.* 180–182.

42 *Spec.* II 256: ... ἵνα καὶ φρονῆς περὶ τῆς μοναρχίας τὰ κάλλιστα etc. (tr. Colson, LCL).

43 *Decal.* 154–155 (tr. Colson, LCL).

44 ... περὶ μοναρχίας ἥ μοναρχεῖται ὁ κόσμος (ibid. 51). Cf. ibid. 154–155; *Her.* 169; *Spec.* I 12 ff. For the “divine monarchy” in Philo, see also E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus*, 21–33.

45 Nevertheless, it must be said that the term democracy does not have in Philo the same

the anarchic landscape of pagan piety with the monotheism of the Old Testament, presenting Isaiah's prophetic words, "I am the first and the last; besides me there is no god" (44:6), shows clearly that the conceptual axis upon which his argument turns in the present passage from the *Against Eunomius* is, as in the one we examined earlier, the opposition between monarchy and democracy. If he does not mention the term monarchy explicitly, this does not bother us. We can supply it for him without worrying for even a moment that perhaps we ourselves are betraying the spirit with which Gregory defends the Orthodox faith against Eunomius. Gregory's thought is transparent; it contains nothing dark or unclear that might create questions in our mind or trouble us. Even the reasons for which he avoids articulating the term monarchy, even if it is clearly upon his lips, are clear and justified. Firstly, monarchy as a theological concept signifying the one, divine principle of the world was exploited by the Arians during the course of the dogmatic controversies of the 4th century, as Eusebius of Caesarea, among others, makes clear by the grandiloquence with which he praises it in his writings.⁴⁶ Thus, Gregory would never have included the term in his argument without including also the necessary explanation of it. However, in the present case such explanations would have distracted his reading public from the subject upon which he wishes to concentrate their attention: the danger implicit in the worship of the Son, if his *homoousion* with the Father is not first solidified. Secondly, again within the context of politics, monarchy is an ambivalent term that can be understood either positively or negatively. "For tyranny slanders monarchy, but a kingdom makes it greatly desirable," as Syne-

negative connotations that it does in the *Against Eunomius*. In its ideal form, before being degraded into an ochlocracy, democracy constitutes for Philo "the best", or "the most well-governed of states" inasmuch as it insures justice and the equal treatment of citizens, with the prominent position that it attributes to the law (*Agr.* 45; *Virt.* 180; *Conf.* 108; *Spec.* IV 237). Even on a cosmological level, Philo often gives us the impression that he conceives of the governance of the universe as a *mixtum genus*, in which monarchy and democracy are blended harmoniously. E.R. Goodenough observes very insightfully, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, Oxford 1962², 65, "[that] [t]he material world is (...) a monarchy in that it gets its regulation from above, but it is a democracy within itself in so far as all created things (...) are equal before the higher reality of the Logos-Law." See also Goodenough's observations concerning the fermentation of stoic ideas in Philo's theology (*cosmopolis, lex natura*, *ibid.*, 66–68).

46 *Eccl. theol.* I 11, 1–5 (GCS Eus. IV, 69,19–70,18); *ibid.* II 7, 1–6 (104,3–29) *Or. de laud. Cons.* III 6 (GCS Eus. I, 201,24–202,2). And among the Anomoeans later the "monarchy of the Father" remains one of the more important positions of Arianism, which the Orthodox fathers of the Church reject unanimously (E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus*, 94–97).

sus writes in his oration to the emperor Arcadius,⁴⁷ a text whose close relation to the *Against Eunomius* we had the chance to discover earlier in the course of our analysis.⁴⁸



The division of monarchy into two different forms of government that are opposed to each other, kingship (βασιλεία) and tyranny (τυραννίς), constitutes a common topos in the mirrors of princes and political treatises of antiquity,⁴⁹ one which we also encounter in the *Against Eunomius*. Gregory uses it in the first part of his work in order to bring a powerful blow against Eunomius and his supporters within the Church.⁵⁰ “If one accepts, as those men uphold,” Gregory states specifically, “that the Lord, without actually being Son, has inherited everything from the Father,⁵¹ but as a creature rules over those things with which he shares a common nature, then how will the rest of creation endure this and not rise in revolt against his rule, being thus thrust down from equality to subjection? How will the creation endure this, if it is lacking in nothing with comparison to him—so far as nature is concerned, he himself being a creature—while it has been condemned to serve him and bow its head to him? This is basically the imposition of tyranny, namely that authority is not assigned based on the superiority of essence, but, while being identical in nature throughout, creation is divided into slaves and lords. The one rules with authority, and the other obeys, just as if he who governs his equals was elected to such an office by means of luck, in some lottery. Why, not even man rules by lottery over the animals, in such a way that while being equal in nature to them has yet become their master,” Gregory continues, “but he rules and is distinguished among other creatures by reason of his natural superiority and logical powers. It is for the same reason that governments are quickly overturned in

47 *De reg.* 13: Μοναρχίαν γὰρ διαβάλλει μὲν τυραννίς, ζηλωτὴν ποιεῖ δὲ βασιλεία (PG 66, 1086C).

48 See above, p. 277.

49 Plato, *Pol.* 291d–e; Aristotle, *Pol.* III v, 1279a36–1279b10; *Eth. nic.* VIII x, 1160a31–1160b12; Xenophon, *Mem.* IV 6,12; Polybius, *Hist.* VI 3,5–4,3; Dio Chrysostom, 1 *Regn.* 65–84; 3 *Regn.* 45–49; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* XXVIK (*Ad Rom.*) 90–91; Plutarch, *Trib. r. p. gen. (Mor.)* 826d–827a et al.

50 For Eunomius’ view of monarchy, which follows Arian theology to the letter (subordinationism), see *Apol.* 27: “In all these things the pre-eminence and sole supremacy of God (ὑπεροχὴ καὶ μοναρχία θεοῦ) is preserved, for the Holy Spirit is clearly subject to Christ, as are all things, while the Son himself is subject to his ‘God and Father’” (Vaggione 70, 11–13).

51 See *Mt* 11, 27; *Jo* 3, 35; 13, 3; *Heb* 1, 2.

human communities, since among those who are equal in nature the one does not tolerate to be ruled over by another while being himself deprived of all authority. There is inborn in all the desire to pursue equality with all those who are of the same blood, and yet have more authority.”⁵² In contrast with the problems created by Eunomius’ insistence to equate the Son with the rest of creation, the *homoousion* establishes everything in its proper place in Gregory’s eyes, thus preventing Christianity from becoming an arbitrary tyrannical government under the second person of the Holy Trinity. “If one believes that the Son came forth from the divine and eternal nature, holding steadfast to the true teaching, all things appear before him harmoniously united with the doctrine of piety,” Gregory concludes. In other words the faithful Christian realizes with clarity that the Lord’s rule over all things is not based on a lottery of chance or some tyrannical dynasty over things equal to him in nature, but by the superiority of his nature he justly holds the royal scepter in his hands.⁵³

In his dispute with Eunomius, Gregory directly addresses, as we observe, the issue of the particular form of constitution by which the world is governed. His treatment of the Son’s ascension to power as Lord of creation is particularly interesting and deserving of our close attention. Firstly, it is clear from the above quote that Gregory employs the stereotypical distinction in ancient political thought of monarchy into kingship and tyranny.⁵⁴ The former corresponds to the beliefs of the Orthodox concerning the Son as one in essence with the Father, while the latter relates to his distorted image as promoted by the heretics, that of a creature altogether alien to the divine essence. However, we must not think that Gregory is making references to kingship and tyranny, drawing on political terminology, simply for rhetorical effect. The theoretical evidence of the distinction between the two forms of government is visibly present in his argument, thus providing us yet another glimpse of his deep familiarity with ancient Greek Literature, in which issues of public life constitute a primary theme. In accordance with the majority of ancient Greek

52 CE I 525–528 (GNO I, 178,9–179,1).

53 CE I 530–531: εἰ δέ τις τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ προσέχων ἐκ τῆς θείας τε καὶ ἀκηράτου φύσεως τὸν υἱὸν εἶναι πιστεύοι, πάντα συνῶδᾳ τῷ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀναφανήσεται δόγματι, τὸ ποιητὴν εἶναι τῶν πάντων τὸν κύριον, τὸ βασιλεῦειν τῶν ὄντων, οὐ κατὰ ἀποκλήρωσιν ἢ κατὰ τυραννικὴν τινα δυναστείαν τῶν ὁμοφύλων προτεταγμένον, ἀλλὰ τῇ τῆς φύσεως ὑπεροχῇ τὸ κατὰ πάντων ἔχοντα κράτος (GNO I, 179,19–26). As regards the lottery of chance, that is, the ascension to power by means of a lottery—a process that refers back to the democracy of classical Greece—see further down, pp. 289–290.

54 A direct reference to monarchy—τὸ τῆς μοναρχίας δόγμα—appears immediately following in the text. See CE I 531 (GNO I, 179,26–29).

thinkers, a kingdom is politically founded upon natural right. The high office held by the king is entirely in keeping with his rare and unique nature. He is possessed of a series of virtues that differentiate him to a considerable degree from all other people: integrity of character, indomitable will, magnanimity, piety, discernment, bravery, temperance, self-denial, respect or even tenderness, and love for each person.⁵⁵ If we add to the king's ethical qualities wealth, power and the nobility of his pedigree, then the distance separating him from the average citizen is widened even further to the point that the king appears as a sort of god among men.⁵⁶ Thus, the authority that he exercises is imposed without force on the masses of his subjects that willingly submit to his commands. The relationship uniting him with them is essentially no different—as classical authors unanimously affirm—than the devotion that the worker bees show to the queen of the hive, or that of herds of animals towards their leader.⁵⁷ The above prerequisites for the establishment of the rule of one man within the community are lacking, on the other hand, in a tyrannical government. In contrast with the king, the tyrant is not possessed of either the moral stature or the competency in managing public affairs that would justify the political privileges that he enjoys. His authority violates the natural equality between himself and his subjects and displays a savage and coercive character. “We cannot hold every absolute government to be a kingship, but only that which is accepted voluntarily, and is directed by appeal to reason, rather than to fear and force,” as Polybius states in his *Histories*,⁵⁸ thus highlighting the fundamental difference between kingship and tyranny. Socrates' position on the same issue, as presented to us in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, is analogous to that of Polybius: “For government of men with their consent and in accordance with the laws of the state was kingship; while government of unwilling subjects and not con-

55 See for example Isocrates, *Ad. Nic.* 11–12; 15; 20; 23–24; 29; 36–37; *Nic.* 29 ff.; 38; *Evag.* 22–24; 40–46; 61; 65; 71; 81; Aristotle, *Pol.* 111 xi, 1288a15–30; Dio Chrysostom, 1 *Regn.* 11–36; 3 *Regn.* 3–11; 51 ff.; *Regn. tyr.* 3; 7; Plutarch, *Princ. iner. (Mor.)* 780b and 781b–782a; Stobaeus, *Flor.* 1v vii, 61–66, 263–279 Wachsmuth-Hense—among a wealth of passages which ancient literature offers us.

56 Isocrates, *Evag.* 72; Plato *Pol.* 303b; Aristotle, *Pol.* 111 viii, 1284a4–12 and 1284b25–32; VII xiii, 1332b17–24.

57 Xenophon, *Cyr.* v 1, 24–25; Plato, *Pol.* 303d–e; Aristotle, *Pol.* 111 viii, 1284a4–18; Dio Chrysostom, 2 *Regn.* 66–71; 4 *Regn.* 61–64; Aelius Aristides *Or.* xxv1k (*Ad. Rom.*) 68; Julian *Or.* 111 [11] (*De Const. imp. reb. g.*) 89d–90a.

58 *Hist.* vi. 4, 2: οὐτε γὰρ πᾶσαν δήπου μοναρχίαν εὐθέως βασιλείαν ῥητέον, ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν ἐξ ἐκόντων συγχωρουμένην καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τὸ πλείον ἢ φόβῳ καὶ βίᾳ κυβερνωμένη (tr. Shuckburgh, *The Histories of Polybius* 1).

trolled by laws, but imposed by the will of the ruler, was despotism.⁵⁹ In order to understand the intellectual elite of ancient Greece in general, the distinctive characteristic of tyranny is that it is imposed against the will of the people and is in disagreement with the communal sense of right. For this reason it is an unstable form of government. It is constantly in danger of being overturned by the people, who perceive it as a sort of yoke on their neck and thus rise up in order to bring it down.⁶⁰ The tyrant's hubris cultivates hatred in the souls of his citizens, in this way fanning the fires of repeated movements and factions against him⁶¹—a situation familiar to every resident of the Greco-Roman world, described for us with dexterity by Gregory in order to demonstrate the absurdity to which Eunomius' teaching leads. In accordance with the novel theories of the Bishop of Cyzicus, the royal reign that the Son inherits from God the Father degenerates into a tyranny, which enslaves all creation under its brutal authority, and comes into constant conflict with its resistance and disobedience.⁶² The governance of the universe by one Lord avoids the danger of authoritarianism, while escaping conflicts and controversies only when it is based upon the natural hierarchy of being, as Gregory very perceptively observes, following directly in the footsteps of ancient Greek political philosophy concerning monarchy. The natural superiority of the Son with relation to creation—by reason of course of the essence he shares with the Father—offers him the right to rule, and establishes his authority over creation as a kingship, lawful and permanent throughout the ages.⁶³

59 Xenophon, *Mem.* IV 6, 12 (tr. Marchant, LCL). Cf. Plato, *Pol.* 276e; 291d–e; Aristotle, *Pol.* IV viii, 1295a19–23; V viii, 1313a4–11; *ibid.* 1314a33–38; Plutarch, *Princ. iner. (Mor.)* 781e; Dio Chrysostom 3 *Regn.* 43–44; 48; Libanius, *Progym.* VII 4, 7.

60 Characteristically, Dio Chrysostom says in his first oration *De regno* that the throne upon which the tyrant sits constantly creaks and rocks back and forth (78–79). Faction (Στάσις) also appears in this oration standing nearby in its personified form, along with Hubris (Ὕβρις), Lawlessness (Ἀνομία) and Savagery (Ὠμότης), next to the tyrannical throne (82). Moreover, the fear with which the tyrant constantly lives and the suspicion he maintains towards anyone who approaches him are also proverbial in Antiquity. See Xenophon, *Hier.*, II 6 and ff.; IV 1–VI 4. 14; Plato, *Resp.* IX 579b–c; Dio Chrysostom, *Tyr.* 49–59; Menander, *Aspis* fr. 1 Austin; Favorinus, fr. 107 Amato (in Stobaeus, *Flor.* IV viii, 7. 14, 297 and 299 Wachsmuth-Hense).

61 Aristotle, *Pol.* V viii, 1312b18–34; Plato, *Resp.* VIII 567d; Libanius, *Progym.* VII 5, 4–7.

62 See, especially, *CE* I 525–526: ἔάν γάρ δοθῇ κατὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτῶν μὴ ἀληθῶς υἱὸν ὄντα κεκληρονομηκεῖναι τῶν πάντων τὸν κύριον, ἀλλὰ κτισθέντα καὶ ποιηθέντα τῶν ὁμογενῶν ἄρχειν, πῶς καταδέξεται καὶ οὐ συστασιάσει ἢ λοιπὴ κτίσις ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοφύλου πρὸς τὸ ὑποχρεῖον ἀπωθεῖσθαι ...; (*GNO* I, 178,9–16).

63 *CE* I 530–531 (179,23–26).

Thus, with the formulaic distinction between kingship and tyranny, Gregory gives an answer to Eunomius that silences him completely, turning against him the very accusations that he had previously raised against the Orthodox, namely that they allegedly overturn and blaspheme the traditional Christian faith in monarchy.⁶⁴ Through Gregory's analysis of the political dimensions contained within the term monarchy, it becomes clear that Eunomius has misunderstood this very term. He confuses it with the oppression of creation at the hands of the arbitrary rule of a lesser being. However, beyond the familiar topoi of Greek political philosophy that we encounter in the *Against Eunomius*, Gregory's argument betrays at certain points the influence of Aristotle. Gregory's position, that if the Son is the same with respect to nature as all of creation, then he has no right to sit alone on the throne of the universe but ought to share it with all of creation, transfers to an ontological level an axiom of public life that Aristotle formulates in his *Politics*. "Now, absolute monarchy, or the arbitrary rule of a sovereign over all the citizens," he writes in the third book of his treatise, "in a city which consists of equals, is thought by some to be quite contrary to nature; it is argued that those who are by nature equals must have the same natural right and worth."⁶⁵ It seems that Gregory has even drawn his argument from Aristotle, that the various forms of government change quickly from

64 See Eunomius, *Apol.* 10; 21–22 and 27 (Vaggione 44,10–46,15; 60,1–62,7; 70,1–72,15). Cf. id., *Exp. fidei.* 2: "We believe in 'the one and only true God' in accordance with the Lord's own teaching (...) he has none to partake his Godhead, none to divide his glory, none to inherit his authority with him, none to share the throne of his kingdom (for the Almighty is the 'one and only God')" (Vaggione 150,1–10); also, the prayer of invocation towards God the Father, from the work *Canons of the Holy Apostles*: "Lord Almighty, Most-High who dwells in the highest, Holy One who rests in the saints, Unoriginate, Monarch, You who have given to us through Christ the preaching of knowledge for the understanding of your glory" (VIII 11, 2 [SC 336, 172]), that faithfully reflects Eunomius' dogmatic beliefs. Also, regarding this, see T. Kopecek, "Neo-Arian Religion: the Evidence of the Apostolic Constitutions", in: R.C. Gregg (ed.), *Arianism. Historical and Theological Reassessments. Papers from the 9th International Conference on Patristic Studies, September 5–10 1983, Oxford, PMS 11*, Philadelphia 1985, 153–180.

65 *Pol.* III x, 1287a10–14: Δοκεῖ δέ τιςιν οὐδὲ κατὰ φύσιν εἶναι τὸ κύριον ἕνα πάντων εἶναι τῶν πολιτῶν ὅπου συνέστηκεν ἐξ ὁμοίων ἢ πόλιν τοῖς γὰρ ὁμοίοις φύσει τὸ αὐτὸ δίκαιον ἀναγκαῖον καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀξίαν κατὰ φύσιν εἶναι (tr. Everson, CTHPT). The axiom that all those who are equal in nature ought to enjoy the same honors and the same political rights, inasmuch as justice and the law of nature thus dictate, is repeated by Aristotle elsewhere in his *Politics*. See III x, 1287a19–24; *ibid.* 1288a1–6; v viii, 1313a4–11; VII xiii, 1332b17–29, where there is also a direct reference to the unsound character of any government that tramples upon natural justice. For an analysis of the above quotes from Aristotle, see E. Braun, *Das dritte Buch der aristotelischen "Politik" (Interpretation)*, Österreichische Akademie der

one to the next throughout the course of history by nature of the innate tendency of all people to not want anyone in authority over them, but rather, since they are all equal with respect to nature, to pursue equality with whomever may be found higher than them in the hierarchy of power. In the 5th book of his *Politics* Aristotle illustrates how the desire for equality is also the main cause of the fall and overturning of governments. "Everywhere inequality is a cause of revolution, but an inequality in which there is no proportion—for instance, a perpetual monarchy among equals; and always it is the desire for equality which rises in rebellion."⁶⁶ Moreover, he adds that all accept on a theoretical basis that political advantages must be distributed according to the merit of each. However, in practice they do just the opposite, convincing themselves that they are equal with the other, even if in reality they are equal only in part.⁶⁷ Not only Aristotle's emphasis on the desire of all people for equality, but also the example of the "perpetual monarchy" (ἀίδιος βασιλεία), which he employs in order to explain the pathogenesis that produces political movements and uprisings, confirm in our minds the affinity of his thought with that of Gregory of Nyssa in his *Against Eunomius*. Finally, Gregory's phrase, καθάπερ ἐκ διακληρώσεως τούτου τοῦ ἀξιώματος συντυχικῶς προσγενομένου τῷ κατὰ τὸν κλήρον λαβόντι τὴν τῶν ὁμοίων προτίμησιν,⁶⁸ in relation to the way in which the Son took up the reigns of governance over the world, clearly constitutes a reference to democracy. In this form of government from classical Greece, were not the vast majority of political offices filled by means of a lottery?⁶⁹ In contrast to aristocracy, oligarchy and the other forms of government in the ancient world, democracy held that only luck is capable to decide who will be elected ruler by the citizens, who are all equal amongst themselves.⁷⁰ Gre-

Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsbericht 247, vol. IV, Wien 1965, 207–215 and P.L. Phillips Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle*, Chapel Hill-London 1998, 186 ff., 235–236, 409–410.

66 Ibid. v i, 1301b27–30: Πανταχοῦ γὰρ διὰ τὸ ἄνισον ἢ στάσις, οὐ μὴ τοῖς ἀνίστοις ὑπάρχει ἀνάλογον (ἀίδιος γὰρ βασιλεία ἄνισος ἐάν ᾗ ἐν ἴσοις)· ὅλως γὰρ τὸ ἴσον ζητοῦντες στασιάζουσιν (tr. Everson, CTHPT). See also, v ii, 1302a24–32.

67 Ibid. v i, 1301b36–38. Interpretations in P.L. Phillips Simpson, *ibid.*, 366–368.

68 CE I 526–527 (GNO I, 178, 20–22).

69 See Herodotus, *Hist.* III 80; Xenophon, *Mem.* I 2, 9; Ps.-Xenophon, [Ath.] I 2–3; Isocrates, *Areop.* 21–23; Plato, *Resp.* VIII 557a; *Leg.* VI 757b–758a and 759b; Aristotle, *Pol.* IV vii, 1294b8–9; *ibid.* IV xii, 1300a31–34; *ibid.* VI i, 1317b14–23.

70 Or god, if we accept along with Fustel de Coulanges the religious provenance of the institutions of ancient democracy. See *id.*, *La Cité antique. Étude sur le culte, le droit, les institutions de la Grèce et de Rome*, Paris 1876⁶, 216–217: "Lorsque les révolutions eurent supprimé partout cette royauté, les hommes paraissent avoir cherché, pour suppléer à la naissance,

gory's interest, of course, does not lie in the evaluation of various procedures by which rulers were elected in ancient Greece. He mentions the elections by lottery in order to illuminate from yet another perspective the logical dead-end to which Eunomius' teachings lead. Just as democracy imposes the equality of all citizens, not taking into account the gradations to which they are subject by means of wealth, virtue and pedigree, in the same way Eunomius equates the Son with creation despite the fact that he is incomparably higher than it. Therefore, the authority that he exercises as Lord of the universe—unless he acquired it by force like a tyrant—must have been won in a lottery. In other words, he was simply luckier than all other creatures, who might have just as easily found themselves in his place! The image of the Son of God being elected ruler by means of democratic ballots for the purpose of staffing the administration of the universe is laughable and would certainly have elicited a smile from Gregory's readers. Furthermore, the facetious air of Gregory's thought shines through even in the improbable eventuality contained within it: the Son is clothed with his high monarchic office by means of a lottery, a characteristic feature of democratic elections.⁷¹ In order to mock his opponent's positions, Gregory allows his imagination to freely conflate characteristic elements from two forms of government diametrically opposed to one another. Nevertheless, Aristotle offers us a precise parallel even for this paradoxical mixture of monarchy and democracy in the *Against Eunomius*. At one point in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, at which he discusses the various forms of government, he states that only that one who is self-sufficient and wealthier in all respects than all other people can possibly be king. He alone will not look to his own benefit but to that of his subjects, inasmuch as he is in need of nothing. If, however, he does not fulfill these prerequisites, then he must have ascended by luck to the throne, just as the rulers of the ancient Athenian democracy won offices by means of ballots.⁷²



un mode d'élection que les dieux n'eussent pas à désavouer. Les Athéniens, comme beaucoup de peuples grecs, n'en virent pas de meilleur que le tirage au sort (...) Pour eux le sort n'était pas le hasard; le sort était la révélation de la volonté divine. De même qu'on y avait recours dans les temples pour surprendre les secrets d'en haut, de même la cité y recourait pour le choix de son magistrat. On était persuadé que les dieux désignaient le plus digne en faisant sortir son nom de l'urne." Likewise G. Glotz *La cité grecque*, Paris 1968², 219–220 and 223.

71 See also further down in the text (CE I 530 [GNO I 179,23–25]).

72 οὐ γάρ ἐστι βασιλεὺς ὁ μὴ αὐτάρκης καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ὑπερέχων· ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος οὐδενὸς προσδεῖται. τὰ ὠφέλιμα οὖν αὐτῷ μὲν οὐκ ἂν σκοποίη, τοῖς δ' ἄρχομένοις· ὁ γὰρ μὴ τοιοῦτος κληρωτὸς ἂν τις εἴη βασιλεὺς (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* VIII x, 1160b.3–7).

Arriving at the end of our essay, I have the impression that our research has not been fruitless. Let us, therefore, summarize our findings. The analysis of the *Against Eunomius* that we have attempted confirmed the philosophical background of Gregory's thought and its close relation with the intellectual currents that spring from the ancient Greek world.⁷³ Concurrently, it also brought into plain view an aspect of Gregory's personality to which researchers have thus far seldom paid great attention: his interest in politics. Gregory's references to the various forms of government, scattered throughout the *Against Eunomius*, constitute a clear testimony to the care and concern he had for issues of civic life. The particular significance that Gregory confers upon democracy or the classification of the forms of monarchy into upright and corrupt clearly manifest the ease with which he manoeuvres through the realm of political philosophy, as well as his readiness to enlist its conclusions in the service of defending the Orthodox faith against Arianism. With these tools in his arsenal he is able, as we had opportunity to observe, to check Eunomius' teachings, to highlight its weak points and to bring to the foreground the serious dangers contained therein for the corruption of the whole physiognomy of Christianity.⁷⁴ The popularization of the doctrine undoubtedly comprises yet another of Gregory's goals in the use of political terminology or forms of thought from political philosophy. How could the degradation to which the Son is subject by Eunomius' pen be any more eloquently expressed, if not by analogy to the citizens of a democracy? The creator of the world is compelled to accept egalitarianism with his creations, to be relegated to the same level as them. Moreover, the presentation of the Lord of the Church as a tyrant provokes our instinctual indignation at those who malign and deny his oneness of essence, thus predisposing us to oppose their positions. Besides being a deeply profound theologian, Gregory is

73 As grandiose as it may sound, the characterization that is usually attributed to Gregory, "the most philosophical of the fathers," is nevertheless justified from a study of his writings: they have an intense theoretical tone, and betray in almost every passage the influence of Greek philosophy. The authenticity of the thought of this Church father, on the other hand, is of course indisputable. As Jaeger put it in his famous lectures at Harvard, Greek philosophy offers Gregory a basic skeleton upon which to construct his system, which derives its content from the Holy Scriptures and the doctrines of the Church (*Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, London-Oxford-New York 1961, 98–99). Cf. J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de st. Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1944, 44–45, 65–66, 141–142, 154, 162–163, 204–207, 214 ff., 314 and A. Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 6–7, 16.

74 For its declination, in other words, either towards Judaism with the denial of the Son's divine nature or towards idolatry by worshipping him as a creation, see above, p. 271.

at the same time a skilled rhetorician, equipped with intimate knowledge of how to arouse his audience's sentiments and guide them where he wishes.⁷⁵

However, I must add that these conclusions do not exhaust the theme to which we have dedicated the present essay. There are other issues, as yet unanswered, in connection with Gregory's political thought, which I believe ought to be researched and discussed. The political views that he supports in the *Against Eunomius* are not aimed at simply clarifying the relationship between the Father and the Son. The collation of these views with those of other fathers of the Church—such as Basil the Great and John Chrysostom—shows that they contain a broader significance for the attitude in general that Christianity maintains against the governmental and institutional authority under which it operates.⁷⁶ Furthermore, their originality in relation to ancient philosophy is clearly visible if we come in for a closer look. If Plato and Aristotle are the pillars of Gregory's political education, he dares to take one step beyond them. For example, his observation concerning the unstable character of various forms of government does appear originally in Aristotle's political theory; however, Gregory takes this theory to conclusions that Aristotle did not. It is not simply the lack of meritocracy and its consolidation by the citizens as an inviolable principle, but even human nature itself *a priori* that brings the collapse of all forms of government—whether it be a kingship, an aristocracy or a democracy—that it attempts to establish here on earth.⁷⁷ In Gregory's writings we perceive the

75 Byzantine intellectuals praised Gregory for his rhetorical virtues as well as the penetration of his theological thought. The *Against Eunomius* constitutes an especial proof, in their opinion, of his multi-talented nature. See the testimonies presented by C. Klock in his study *Untersuchungen zu Stil und Rythmus bei Gregor von Nyssa. Ein Beitrag zum Rhetorikverständnis der griechischen Väter*, Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie 173, Frankfurt am M. 1987, 8–37.

76 John Chrysostom, in one of his homilies in which he makes reference to the dominance of humanity over irrational nature, distinguishes between two forms of authority: natural rule (φυσική ἀρχή) and elective (χειροτονητή ἀρχή). The former derives from nature and is present among wild animals, while the latter derives from human law. In contrast with natural authority, its law-based counterpart, which is founded upon human justice, has an artificial character. It essentially constitutes a convention that is imposed for the sake of the community's necessities, which conflicts with the natural equality shared by all humanity. For this reason it is unstable and subject to constant change and alteration (*De stat., Hom. VII*, 2 [PG 49, 93]). Cf. id., 3 *In Gen.* 2 (SC 433, 220–238) and Gregor of Nyssa, *CE* I 527–528 (GNO I, 178,26–179,1); furthermore, Basil the Gr., 8 *In Hex.*, 4 (SC 26^{bis}, 446–448).

77 *CE* I 527–528: αἱ δὲ ἀνθρώπωνι δυναστεῖαι τούτου χάριν ἀγχιστρόφους ἔχουσι τὰς μεταβολάς, ὅτι οὐδέχεται τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ὁμότιμον μὴ ἰσομοιρεῖν [ἐν] τῷ κρείττονι, ἀλλὰ τις ἔγκειται φυσικὴ πᾶσιν ἐπιθυμία πρὸς τὸ ἐπικρατοῦν ἐξισάζεσθαι, ὅταν ὁμόφυλον ᾖ (GNO I, 178,26–179,1). See, in

outlines of a political thought that ferments together with a theological problematization concerning the oneness in essence of the persons of the Holy Trinity, while at the same time incorporating ideas that were originally produced during the extensive evolution of the Church's apologetics towards the pagan world.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, I am afraid that there is no time left for further analyses. We must end our essay here. I believe that everything that has thus far been said offers us an incentive to approach Gregory from a new and different perspective. Furthermore, we have the opportunity to reflect seriously to what degree can the usual view encountered in the bibliography be accepted—that the East found in the person of Eusebius of Caesarea the ideal expression of its political questions, just as did the West in the person of Augustine and his genuine students.⁷⁹

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comparison, the passages from Aristotle's *Politics* v i, 1301b27–30 and 36–38, cited above in our essay.

- 78 A comparison of Gregory's views with arguments that Macarius Magnes formulates in his dialogue with the anonymous pagan regarding the nature of political authority, suffices to convince us of the verity of the word. For this interesting dialogue in the *Apocriticus* of Macarius and the particular political theology it contains, see E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus*, 52–56.
- 79 See, for example, F. Young, "Christianity", in: C. Rowe et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge 2000, 653 and 660. Here I would also like to thank Mark Huggins for his assistance in preparing the English translation of this article.

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Name und Sein. Zu den sprachphilosophischen Grundlagen in der Schrift *Contra Eunomium* des Gregor von Nyssa*

Theo Kobusch

Die Bedeutung der Sprachphilosophie des Gregor von Nyssa ist heute weder dem allgemeinen Bewußtsein noch dem engeren Kreis der historischen Forschung präsent. Ein Blick auf die zusammenfassenden Darstellungen der Lehre Gregors in Lexika und Handbüchern der letzten Jahre zeigt, daß sie vorwiegend unter einem ontologischen, erkenntnistheoretischen, anthropologischen oder theologischen Aspekt gesehen wird. Die Sprachphilosophie dagegen scheint nicht einer eigenen Rubrik würdig zu sein¹. Eine gewisse Ausnahme macht da der berühmte Aufsatz über Eunomius und die neuplatonische Auslegung des

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see T. Kobusch, „Zu den sprachphilosophischen Grundlagen in der Schrift *Contra Eunomium* des Gregor von Nyssa“, in: L.F. Mateo-Secco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El „Contra Eunomium 1“ en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 247–268. For further bibliography on this topic: T. Kobusch, „Die Epinoia – Das menschliche Bewußtsein in der antiken Philosophie“, in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004), Leiden – Boston 2007, 3–20; L. Karfiková, „Der Ursprung der Sprache nach Eunomius und Gregor vor dem Hintergrund der antiken Sprachtheorien (CE II 387–444: 543–553)“, in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, 279–206; C. Apostolopoulos, „Die Rolle der Epinoia nach Eunomius und Gregor und die theologisch-philosophischen Hintergründe (CE II 171–195)“, in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, 239–246; L. Chvátal, „‘He Brandishes over Us This Aristotelian Weapon’ (CE II 620). An Example of (Mis)use of Aristotle's Name in Controversy over Unbegottenness“, in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*, 399–410.

1 Vgl. z.B. M. Canévet, „Grégoire de Nysse“, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* VI (1967) 971–1011; Id., „Gregor von Nyssa“, in: G. Ruhbach – J. Sudbrack (Hg.), *Große Mystiker. Leben und Wirken*, München 1984, 17–35; G. May, „Gregor von Nyssa“, in: H. Fries – G. Kretschmar (Hg.), *Klassiker der Theologie I*, München 1981, 91–103; H. Dörrie, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *RAC* 12 (1983) 863–895; E. Mühlhberg, „Gregor von Nyssa“, in: M. Greschat (Hg.), *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. 2, Stuttgart 1984, 49–62; D.L. Balás, „Gregor von Nyssa“, *TRE* XIV (1985), 173–181; F. Dünzl, „Gregor von Nyssa. Mystik und Gottesliebe“, in: W. Geerlings (Hg.), *Theologen der christlichen Antike*, Darmstadt 2002, 98–114.

Kratylos von J. Daniélou². Doch zum einen halten die gewagten Hypothesen einer kritischen Überprüfung wohl nicht stand³, zum anderen kommt auch hier die sprachphilosophische Position des Gregor nicht deutlich zum Ausdruck. So hat die moderne Gregor-Forschung vor allem und etwas einseitig nur die durch das scholastische Denken gegebenen Impulse aufgegriffen, dem ja schon besonders die Anthropologie und Gotteslehre des Nysseners attraktiv erschien. Dagegen sind die Anregungen der Aufklärung, die sich vorwiegend auf die Sprachphilosophie Gregors beziehen, weithin – auch im Zeitalter der Sprachphilosophien – fruchtlos geblieben. Die Denker der Aufklärung beziehen sich mit historischem Recht auf Gregor von Nyssa als ihren Vordenker. Denn in der Tat scheint hier vorgedacht zu sein, was in den im Geist der Aufklärung verfaßten Schriften Herders, Hamanns und auch noch Wilhelms von Humboldt ausgedrückt wird, nämlich die „Untrennbarkeit des menschlichen Bewußtseins und der menschlichen Sprache“ und damit die Wahrheit des Satzes: „Der Mensch ist nur Mensch durch die Sprache“ (W. von Humboldt). Ist Gregor von Nyssa also der erste christliche Aufklärer? Jedenfalls kann nur dann, wenn der Zusammenhang zwischen der Position des Nysseners und der Position der Aufklärung berücksichtigt wird, auch der Grundgedanke moderner Sprachphilosophie in seiner historischen Wahrheit erkannt werden: Er ist die späte Folge einer spezifisch christlichen Idee, nach der die menschliche Vernunft und das, was sie in Freiheit hervorbringt, in ihrer eigenen Würde anerkannt ist und auch als von Gott anerkannt gewußt wird. In diesem Sinne wird hier die sprachphilosophische Lehre Gregors zu vergegenwärtigen versucht, deren Bedeutung am ehesten dann klar wird, wenn ihre Wirkungsgeschichte in der Aufklärung in einem ersten Abschnitt dargestellt wird und wenn ferner und zweitens die sprachphilosophische Position des Eunomius dageengehalten wird, ehe dann im letzten Abschnitt Gregors Sprachlehre selbst betrachtet werden kann.

I **Zur Wirkungsgeschichte der sprachphilosophischen Kontroverse zwischen Eunomius und Gregor von Nyssa**

Wann genau die Rezeptionsgeschichte der Schrift *Contra Eunomium* des Gregor von Nyssa in der neueren Zeit beginnt, liegt im Dunkeln. Das Mittelalter

2 J. Daniélou, „Eunome l'Arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle“, *REG* 69 (1956) 412–432.

3 Vgl. J.M. Rist, „Basil's 'Neoplatonism': Its Background and Nature“, in: Id., *Platonism and its Christian Heritage*, London 1985, 137–220, bes. 185 ff.

interessierte sich vor allem für die „Anthropologie“ Gregors, d. h. insbesondere für seine Schrift *De hominis opificio* und die unter dem Namen des Gregor laufende Schrift des Nemesius *De natura hominis*. Im wesentlichen gilt das auch für die Zeit der Renaissance, in der die „platonische, ja christliche Philosophie des Gregor Nyssenus“ – so nennt sie einmal Cono⁴, der Briefpartner des Beatus Rhenanus und frühe Editor des Gregor (in Straßburg bei Schürer 1512) – besonders attraktiv erscheint. Allerdings erwähnt derselbe Editor neben den berühmtesten Werken auch schon die Schrift gegen Eunomius, indem er sagt: „*Composuit orationem eximiam in Eunomium acutissimum hereticum*“. Vermutlich ist damit die berühmte *Oratio* XII gemeint, die erst in der Jaegerischen Ausgabe als das zweite Buch ihren richtigen Platz in dem großen Werk erhielt. Eigentlich wichtig wird Gregors Schrift aber erst für das Denken der Aufklärung, an dessen Anfang auch der Oratorianer Richard Simon steht, der von 1638 bis 1712 lebte und als Begründer der historischen Bibelkritik gilt. In seinem 1678 erschienenen und sofort unterdrückten Werk *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* kritisiert er die bisher üblichen Vorstellungen von der Entstehung der Sprache. Mit breiter Berufung auf Gregor von Nyssa legt er dar, daß Gott weder als Urheber der Sprache noch als Verursacher der Verschiedenheit der Sprachen gedacht werden kann. Vielmehr wollte Gott, – so R. Simon und Gregor von Nyssa – daß die menschliche Natur sich auf je ihre Weise auch sprachlich entfalte. „Et il ajoute de plus, que cette puissance naturelle de raisonner, qui est dans l’homme, vient de Dieu, et qu’elle est la véritable cause de cette diversité de Langues, qui se trouve dans les nations différentes“⁵.

Einige Jahre später versucht Claudius Frassen, der berühmte Franziskaner und große Erklärer des Duns Scotus, die Lehre des Nysseners mit der traditionellen Auffassung in Einklang zu bringen. Die Einsicht des Gregor, daß nicht Gott den Dingen die Bezeichnungen gegeben und den Menschen wie ein Schul-lehrer seinen Schülern Unterricht gegeben hat, ist nach Frassen nicht „der allgemeinen Lehre der Theologen“ zuwider. Auch die Theologen würden doch bekräftigen, daß – wie Gregor positiv lehrt – der Mensch mit Vernunft begabt sei, die den Dingen die Bezeichnungen zuweise⁶.

Von nun an ist die Sprachlehre des Nysseners immer mit im Blick, wenn es z. B. auch in den großen Kommentaren zum Alten Testament um das Problem der Sprache geht. Augustin Calmet, dessen Kommentar zum Alten Testament

4 Vgl. A. Horavitz – K. Hartfelder (Hg.), *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, Leipzig 1886, 45, n. 25.

5 R. Simon, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, Paris 1680, 94–96.

6 Vgl. C. Frassen, *Disquisitiones Biblicae quatuor libris comprehensae*, Paris 1682, 139–140.

eine scharfe Kritik durch R. Simon erfuhr, weist darauf hin, – unter Bezugnahme auf *Oratio XII Contra Eunomium* 353.354 = CE II (GNO I, 329,7) – daß nach Gregor der Vorgang der Divergenz der Sprachen eine natürliche Folge der Zerstreuung der Völker über die Welt ist. Gregor war darüber hinaus der erste Autor, so berichtet Calmet, der die Auffassung vertrat, daß die erste Sprache verloren gegangen ist, und ihr haben sich aus anderen Gründen so berühmte „Moderne“ wie Grotius oder Huet angeschlossen⁷.

Auf die besondere Sprachlehre des Gregor von Nyssa wird aber auch innerhalb jenes literarischen Genres Bezug genommen, das sich nicht im Rahmen eines Kommentars, sondern hauptsächlich mit dem Problem der Entstehung der ersten oder der Ursprache bzw. einer bestimmten Sprache befaßt, und zwar sowohl in Frankreich, z. B. von E. Morin, wie in England, z. B. von G. Sharpe, wie auch in Deutschland, so von J.N. Funck, der Professor für Beredsamkeit, Geschichte und Politik in Rinteln war⁸.

Mit Berufung auf die im zweiten Buch der Schrift gegen Eunomius dargelegte These Gregors hat W. Warburton, Bischof von Gloucester, versucht, die Meinung des Père Simon kritisch zu präzisieren⁹. In dieser Form wird die These dann von E.B. de Condillac übernommen und beifällig zitiert¹⁰. Freilich hat auch die Gegenthese des Eunomius von der göttlichen Herkunft der Sprache ihre Verteidiger noch nach der Aufklärung gefunden, z. B. in M. de Bonald, der in seiner Schrift *Recherches Philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connaissances morales* die Lehre Condillacs von der Sprachentstehung kritisiert¹¹.

Im Bereich der deutschen Aufklärungsbewegung und ihrer Gegenbewegung bezieht man sich ebenfalls auf den Nyssener. Johann Peter Süssmilch (1707–1767) legte im Jahre 1756 der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin eine Arbeit vor, die als Antwort auf die von Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis (1689–1759), dem Präsidenten der Akademie, gestellte Preisfrage nach

7 A. Calmet, *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament*, Paris 1725, xvi; xviii; 123, nimmt Calmet noch einmal auf Gregors zweites Buch und R. Simon Bezug.

8 Vgl. E. Morin, *Exercitationes de lingua primaeva*, Utrecht 1694, 40; G. Sharpe, *Upon the Origin, Construction, Division and Relation of Languages*, London 1751, 2; J.N. Funccius, *De Origine et pueritia Latinae Linguae*, Marburg 1735, 34 ff., § XVIII.

9 W. Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses, Demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist*, Bd. 2, London 1741, 81 f.

10 Vgl. E. Bonnot de Condillac, *Oeuvres Philosophiques*, Vol. I, (ed. G. Le Roy), Paris 1947, 60, n. 1.

11 Vgl. M. de Bonald, *Recherches Philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connoissances morales*, in: *Oeuvres Complètes de M. de Bonald*, Tome III, Paris 1864, 100.

dem Ursprung der Sprache gedacht war. In dieser Arbeit mit dem Titel *Versuch eines Beweises, daß die erste Sprache ihren Ursprung nicht von Menschen, sondern allein vom Schöpfer erhalten habe*, die erst 1766 erscheint, wird auch die Position des berühmten Benediktiners und Criticus P. Simon referiert, der behauptet hat „nach dem Beispiel des alten Kirchenvaters Gregorius Nyssenus, daß der Mensch nicht gleich in der Schöpfung die Sprache von Gott empfangen, sondern daß er sie selbst erst habe schaffen müssen“¹².

J.G. Herder, der auf die Schrift Süßmilchs antwortet, nimmt dagegen – wenn auch nicht in seiner berühmten *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* – positiv auf Gregor als einen Vorkämpfer der aufklärerischen Position Bezug. „Ich folge also diesmal zween blinden Heiden, dem Diodor von Sicilien und Vitruv. Zween Katholischen Christen, dem heiligen Gregor, und für mich noch heiligern Richard Simon, ... und setze, wenn nicht mehr zum Spaas voraus: ‚Menschengeschlechter haben sich ihre Sprache selbst gebildet‘“¹³. Und an anderer Stelle bei Herder heißt es: „Eine jede Gesellschaft in ihrer Kindheit, muß auch eine Sprache der Kindheit haben; es bleibt aber völlig eine andere Frage, ob diese Sprache das Kind selbst erfindet, oder ob sie ihm ein anderer vorbetet. Das erste, das ein Grieche, Diodor von Sicilien (histor. 1,1), ein Römer, Vitruv (II): dazu noch ein alter und neuer Catholischer Christ (Gregor. Nyssen. Orat. XII contr. Eunomium. Richard Simon, histor. krit. I c. 14. 15) behauptet, scheint immer wahrscheinlicher und dem Naturgange ähnlicher, wenigstens für einen Weltweisen, der es dem Sinn des Orakels gemäß hält: durch das Auflösen und nicht das Zerhauen des Knotens ein Mann zu werden“¹⁴. Die Herdersche Begründung der hier nur angedeuteten Auffassung in der *Abhandlung* war von solcher Stringenz, daß ihr auch J.A. Dathe nicht die Anerkennung versagen konnte, obgleich er ein Vorwort zu Brian Waltons berühmtem Werk *In Biblia Polyglotta Prolegomena* verfaßt hatte, in dem der Bischof von Chester ja die traditionelle, Herder entgegengesetzte Ansicht vertreten hatte. Dathe schreibt: „Richard Simon ... verteidigt den natürlichen Ursprung der Sprache, die dem Menschen von Natur aus eigene, da sie offenbar teilweise aus der Notwendigkeit, teilweise aus der gesellschaftlichen Natur des Menschen hervorgegangen sei. Auf diesen Argumenten haben den menschlichen Ursprung der Sprache zu

12 Vgl. J.P. Süßmilch, *Versuch eines Beweises, daß die erste Sprache ihren Ursprung nicht von Menschen, sondern allein vom Schöpfer erhalten habe*, Berlin 1766, 10.

13 Vgl. J.G. Herder, „Über die neuere deutsche Literatur: Fragmente“, in: B. Suphan (Hg.), *Sämtliche Werke*, Band II, Berlin 1877, 67–69.

14 Der Hg. des 2. Bandes weist in seinen „Anmerkungen“ 370 auf die älteste ungedruckte Bearbeitung der „Geschichte des Liedes“ (1764) hin.

begründen versucht Gregor von Nyssa, einer der Kirchenväter, in seiner zwölften Rede gegen Eunomius, unter den heidnischen Schriftstellern aber Lukrez und Diodor¹⁵. Freilich ist hier, wie auch bei den französischen Aufklärern nur die *Oratio* XII, d. h. das zweite Buch der Schrift *Contra Eunomium* der Bezugspunkt.

Erstmals ausführlich über die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Gregor und Eunomius im ganzen berichtet dagegen J.S. Semler in seiner *Historischen Einleitung* zu S.J. Baumgartens *Untersuchung Theologischer Streitigkeiten*¹⁶. Allerdings werden hier die sprachphilosophischen Elemente stark zugunsten der dogmatischen Inhalte zurückgedrängt. In seiner Inhaltsangabe des zweiten Buches von *CE*, das ja schon sehr früh eine eigene Überlieferung hatte¹⁷ und auch noch bei Semler „der 2te Theil der 12ten Rede“ genannt wird, spricht Semler in der *Epinoia*-Lehre Gregor jegliche Originalität ab. „Sehr weitläufig verteidigt er darauf wider den Eunomius, was Basilius von ἐπίνοια gesagt hatte“¹⁸. Der eigentliche sprachphilosophische Gegensatz besteht deswegen nach Semler zwischen Eunomius und Basilius¹⁹. Aber auch wenn man möglicherweise hinsichtlich der Originalität der Sprachlehre des Nysseners streiten kann, steht doch unbezweifelbar fest, daß es die Aufklärung war, die diese sprachphilosophische Problematik des vierten Jahrhunderts dem abendländischen Bewußtsein allererst wieder präsent gemacht hat. Die Aufklärung betrachtete Gregor von Nyssa als einen ihrer Bundesgenossen im Kampf gegen falsche Vorurteile. Sie hat ihn in den Rang des ersten christlichen Aufklärers erhoben, der gerade auf dem Gebiet der Sprachphilosophie die Sache der autonomen Vernunft vertreten hat. Trotz dieser bedeutsamen Vergegenwärtigung der Sprachlehre des

15 Vgl. J.A. Dathe, „Praefatio“, in: B. Walton, *In Biblia Polyglotta Prolegomena*, Leipzig 1777, v–ix; abgedruckt in: W. Proß – J.G. Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, München – Wien 1978, 221–223.

16 S.J. Baumgarten, *Untersuchung Theologischer Streitigkeiten*, Dritter Band. *Mit einigen Anmerkungen, Vorrede und fortgesetzter Geschichte der christlichen Glaubenslehre*, hg. von J.S. Semler, Halle 1764, 201–240, § 99.

17 Vgl. W. Jaeger, „Prolegomena“, in: Id., *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* II, Leiden 1960, xvii.

18 S.J. Baumgarten, *Untersuchung Theologischer Streitigkeiten*, Dritter Band. *Mit einigen Anmerkungen, Vorrede und fortgesetzter Geschichte der christlichen Glaubenslehre*, hg. von J.S. Semler, Halle 1764, 219.

19 Ibid., 126 ff. In der Bewertung ist von Semler offenbar abhängig J.M. Schröckh (*Christliche Kirchengeschichte*, Band XIV, 2. Aufl., Leipzig 1825, 29–53), der über die Kontroverse zwischen Gregor und Eunomius berichtet. Nach Schröckh haben wir es mit einer „umständlichen Erörterung“ zu tun, sie sei von „ermüdender Weitschweifigkeit“ und eine „Durchwässerung der richtigsten Gedanken und Wiederholungen ohne Zahl“.

Gregor von Nyssa durch die Aufklärung ist ihm jedoch bis heute versagt geblieben, was ihm zusteht: ein fester Platz in jeder Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie²⁰.

II Die sprachphilosophische Position des Eunomius

Eunomius bewegt sich schon in den einleitenden Bemerkungen zu seiner 1. *Apologie* in jenem Begriffsfeld, das dann in seinen Schriften wie auch bei Basilius und Gregor von Nyssa zum Gegenstand theoretischer Reflexion wird. Sein erklärtes Ziel, die Homologie mit seinen literarischen Gegnern, kann, wie er weiß, nur erreicht werden, wenn man unerschütterlich mit den jeweiligen „Namen“, d. h. den äußeren Bezeichnungen, den wahren Sinn verbindet. Deswegen will er zum Zweck der *Apologie* mit „genaueren Worten“ sein Denken zu explizieren suchen, indem er entweder den Sinn seiner Schrift selbst enthüllt oder die äußeren Worte an schon vorliegende Deutungen oder Begriffe (ἔννοιαι) angleicht. Auf einen solchen „natürlichen Begriff“ (φυσικὴ ἔννοια) beruft sich Eunomius auch bei der Explikation seiner Hauptthese, die besagt, daß das Wesen Gottes in seinem „Ungezeugtsein“ besteht²¹. Da nun auch das ἀγέννητον unbezweifelbar ein „Name“ oder eine Bezeichnung ist, Namen aber doch durch die menschliche Vernunft gegeben zu werden scheinen, stellt sich die Frage, was ein Name und schließlich, was diese Vernunft eigentlich ist. In der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Eunomius einerseits und Basilius und Gregor andererseits geht es eigentlich, zuletzt und vor allem um das Problem der *Epinomia*. Keiner hat das so klar gesehen wie Basilius, der die entscheidende Frage stellt, „was denn eigentlich die *Epinomia* sei“. Wie hältst du es mit der menschlichen Vernunft und ihren inneren Resultaten, das ist die sprachphilosophische Gretchenfrage, die das vierte Jahrhundert in Atem hält. Eunomius' Antwort auf diese Frage ist von erfrischender Klarheit: „Das, was durch das menschliche Denken gesagt wird, hat nur in den Namen und in der Aussprache das Sein und verschwindet naturgemäß zusammen mit den Lauten der Stimme“²². Eunomius begreift also die *Epinomia* als puren *flatus vocis*²³. In der Form der

20 Völlig unberücksichtigt geblieben ist er z. B. auch in E. Coseriu, *Die Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, T. 1, Tübingen 1975.

21 Eunomius, *Apologie* 7 (SC 305, 244).

22 Eunomius, *Apologie* 8 (SC 305, 248); vgl. auch Gregor, CE II 44 (GNO I, 238, 27 ff.).

23 Vgl. auch B. Sesboüé, *L'Apologie d'Eunome de Cyzique et le Contre Eunome (L. I–III) de Basile de Césarée*, Roma 1980, 35; und A. Benito y Duran, „El nominalismo arriano y la filosofía cristiana: Eunomio y San Basilio“, *Augustinus* 5 (1960) bes. 213 und 215.

schnell vergänglichen Lautgestalt ist ihr Sein nur ein physisches Sein, das entsteht und vergeht wie anderes Physische auch. Das geistige Fundament kommt hier nicht zur Geltung. Gregor von Nyssa klagt genau dieses geistige Sein des Gedanklichen als notwendigen Bestandteil einer vernünftigen Benennung und Bezeichnung der Dinge gegenüber Eunomius ein. Der „natürliche Begriff“ oder „naturgemäße Name“, auf den sich Eunomius beruft, ist ein solches in den Herzen der Menschen grundgelegtes, unveränderliches geistiges Fundament, auf dem die äußere Benennung (προσηγορία) beruht. Nach dem „verdrehten Wort“ des Eunomius dagegen ist die äußere Benennung alleine schon ausreichend und führt von sich aus schon zu einem anderen Begriff, wie z. B. die Bezeichnung „Vater“ zum Begriff des „Ungezeugten“. Die Benennung für sich genommen ist aber nichts anderes als der lautliche Ausdruck (ἡ ἐν ταῖς συλλαβαῖς προφορά)²⁴. Sie hat die Funktion des Bezeichnens. Und zwar bezeichnet sie die Substanz der Sache selbst, also die Sache in ihrem Wesen²⁵. Um einen angemessenen Namen für die Sache zu finden, ist es nach Eunomius notwendig, auf die „Begriffe der Substrate zu achten“ und ihnen die Benennungen anzugleichen²⁶. Diese Begriffe sind keine von der menschlichen Vernunfttätigkeit hervorgebrachten oder gebildeten Begriffe, sondern die „natürlichen Begriffe“ von der Sache, die jedem von Natur mitgegeben sind. Somit ergibt sich eine einfache Struktur des menschlichen Sprechens nach Eunomius: nur zwei Ebenen sind auseinanderzuhalten, die der lautlichen Äußerung und die der durch die Namen oder Benennungen bezeichneten Substanzen. Für die Sprachlehre des Eunomius ist diese Deutung der *Epinoia* als bloßer lautlicher Äußerung charakteristisch. Sie kennzeichnet ihn deutlich als Arianer. Der Arianismus ist angemessen gar nicht zu verstehen, wenn diese Probleme der Sprachphilosophie nicht beachtet werden. Die Sprachphilosophie ist, wie bei Basilius und Gregor, auch die theoretische Grundlage des Arianismus²⁷. Sie ist in dem einheitlichen Verständnis der *Epinoia* erkennbar. Wie Eunomius verstand auch schon Aetius die *Epinoia*, die von der Hypostasis unterschieden werden muß, als die flüchtige Gestalt einer äußeren Bezeichnung. Das geht aus mehreren (z. T. sarkastischen) Formulierungen des *Syntagmation* hervor, z. B. auch aus folgender, die die Form einer *reductio ad absurdum* hat: „Wenn das ‚Ungezeugte‘ ein bloßer Name (ψιλὸν ὄνομα) ist, die bloße Äußerung aber die Wirklichkeit

24 Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* I 606 (GNO I, 201,4 ff.).

25 Eunomius, *Apologie* 18,24 f. (SC 305, 270).

26 Ibid., 18,7 ff. (SC 305, 268).

27 Die Darstellung dieser sprachphilosophischen Grundlagen fehlt z. B. auch bei A.M. Ritter, „Arianismus“, *TRE* 3 (1978) 692–719.

Gottes über alles Erzeugte hebt, dann ist also die Äußerung der Menschen qualitativ höherstehend als die Wirklichkeit des Allmächtigen²⁸. Auf diese Weise wird deutlich, daß nach Aetius die *Epinoia* als bloße Äußerung der substantiellen Wirklichkeit gegenübersteht. Wenn man Athanasius glauben darf, ist das auch die Auffassung des Arius gewesen. Arius habe alle Bestimmungen Gottes ins bloß gedankliche Sein aufgelöst. Gott aber sei nichts von all dem selbst, da ihm so nur ein nominelles oder fiktionales Sein zugeschrieben werde. Darin ist nach Athanasius das Diabolische der Arianer erkennbar, die „sich selbst zwar wahrhafte Existenz“, dem göttlichen Logos jedoch nur Sein dem Namen nach zuschreiben.²⁹

Nach dieser einheitlich arianischen Lehre erscheint die menschliche Vernunft in ihrer Ohnmacht, denn sie hat – nach Eunomius – keinerlei konstitutive Funktion bei der Erkenntnis der Dinge. Deswegen kann es hier auch nicht jenen Bereich der von den Stoikern ontologisch entdeckten *σημαινόμενα* geben, die als die von der menschlichen Vernunft konstituierten immanenten Inhalte aufzufassen sind und folglich sowohl von den bezeichnenden Lauten wie auch von den bezeichneten Dingen unterschieden werden müssen. Eunomius sagt ausdrücklich, daß nicht eine Verschiedenheit zwischen dem Wesen und dem „Bezeichneten“ gedacht werden könne, da der Name, das individuelle wirkliche Wesen (*ὑπόστασις*) selbst bezeichne³⁰. Nimmt man jedoch, wie Basilius und Gregor, in stoischem Sinne ein von den äußeren Bezeichnungen unterschiedenes, bezeichnetes, durch die menschliche Vernunft konstituiertes Noema an, hat das nach Eunomius unabsehbare theologische Folgen. Denn dann könnte Gottes Wesen nicht mehr in seiner Einfachheit gedacht und bewahrt werden, weil er an den vielen gedachten Noemata teilhätte und dieser Teilhabe zur Vervollkommenung seines Seins bedürfte³¹. Da dies absurd ist, kann man allgemein sagen, daß die menschliche Vernunft nicht mitkonstitutiv sein kann

28 Aetius, *Syntagmation* 26 (ed. L.R. Wickham, „The Syntagmation of Aetius the Anomean“, *JThS* 19 [1968] 543); vgl. auch 12 und 17.

29 Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* II 38 (AthW I/1 2, 214); vgl. auch *ibid.*, I 9 (AthW I/1 2, 118, 20–21): οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς καὶ μόνος αὐτὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς Λόγος, ἀλλ’ ὀνόματι μόνον λέγεται Λόγος καὶ Σοφία, καὶ χάριτι λέγεται Υἱὸς καὶ δύναμις; II 37 (AthW I/1 2, 213); *De sententia Dionysii* 2 (AthW 2/1 46–47); *ibid.*, 23 (AthW 2/1 62–63); *Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae* 13 (AthW I/1 1, 54); Nach G.C. Stead, „The Thalia of Arius and the Testimony of Athanasius“, *JThS* 29 (1978) bes. 34 ff. sind freilich solche und ähnliche Formulierungen, die nicht durch den *Thalia*-Text gestützt werden können, auf ein Mißverständnis des Athanasius zurückzuführen.

30 Eunomius, *Apologie* 12,9 (SC 305, 258).

31 Eunomius bei Gregor von Nyssa, *CE* II 499 (GNO I, 372, 1 ff.).

beim Erfassen des Wesens der Dinge. Was sie hervorbringt, ist unbedeutend (im Wortsinne), falsch, trügerisch, fiktional und hat mit der wahren Erkenntnis der Dinge nichts zu tun. Deswegen gilt nach Eunomius von dem durch die menschliche Vernunft Gesagten, daß es entweder nur in der lautlichen Äußerung Existenz besitze – wie z. B. das nichts Bezeichnende, d. h. die *voces non significativae*³² – oder in einem eigenen Denkkakt. Und davon ist das eine durch Vergrößerung entstanden, wie z. B. alles Kolossale, anderes durch Verkleinerung, z. B. die Pygmäen, oder durch Hinzufügung, wie die Polykephalen, oder durch Zusammensetzung, wie z. B. die Mischtiere³³. Es wäre ganz falsch, wollte man in diesem Zusammenhang an den stoischen Sinn der *Epinoia* oder, wie das J. Daniélou vermutete, an einen Einfluß des Origenes denken³⁴. Vielmehr werden die entsprechenden Parallelen zum Eunomiestext bei Sextus Empiricus auch als Zeugnisse epikureischer Philosophie verstanden³⁵. Während die *Epinoia* in der stoischen Philosophie die konstitutive und schöpferische Funktion des menschlichen Bewußtseins bei jedem Erkenntnisakt ausdrückt, ist sie in epikureischer Sicht nur der Urheber des Nichtigen, Phantastischen, bloß Fiktiven, d. h. des bloß zufällig Gedachten. Das ist offenbar jedenfalls die eunomianische Interpretation des Begriffs *Epinoia*. Denn Eunomius bringt, um Basilius der Leugnung der göttlichen Providenz bezichtigen zu können, die *Epinoia* ausdrücklich in Zusammenhang mit der epikureischen Physiologie: das durch die menschliche Vernunft Entworfenen, Gedachten, Vermeinten, Vorgestellten oder

32 Als Beispiele solcher *voces non significativae* sind bei Gregor CE III/5 44 (GNO II, 176,6f.). „Skindapsos“ und das auch noch später gebräuchliche „Blityri“ genannt, offenkundig eine Rezeption aus der *Stoa* (vgl. SVF II, 149; III, 20). Gregor hat solche nichts bedeutenden Ausdrücke in *Eccl* I (GNO V, 281,4ff.) beschrieben als das „Nichtexistierende, das allein im Hervorbringen des Wortes das Sein hat“. Ein solcher Ausdruck ist ein leerer Schall, der, wenn man ihn hört, nichts Bestimmtes zu denken gibt. Er gehört mithin zu dem, ὧν τὸ σημαίνόμενον ἐστὶν οὐδέν.

33 Eunomius bei Gregor CE II 179 (GNO I, 276,22ff.). Die verschiedenen „Erkenntnisweisen“ der *Epinoia* werden bei Stoikern (Vgl. SVF II, 87/88) und Epikureern ähnlich beschrieben (vgl. H. Usener [ed.], *Epicurea*, Stuttgart 1961, fr. 36). Zu dem Beispiekkatalog bei Eunomius vgl. bes. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 9,393f. und 8,58ff.

34 J. Daniélou, „Eunome l'Arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle“, 417–418; 424. Origenes unterscheidet zwischen dem σημαίνόμενον und dem real Existierenden. Vgl. dazu T. Kobusch, „Die philosophische Bedeutung des Kirchenvaters Origenes: zur christlichen Kritik an der Einseitigkeit der griechischen Wesensphilosophie“, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 165 (1985) 96.

35 Z. B. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 8,58ff. Vgl. H. Usener, *Glossarium Epicureum*, Roma 1977, *sub voce* ἐπίνοια. Zum Problem der Erkenntnis der Fabeltiere u. ä. in der epikureischen Philosophie vgl. J. M. Rist, *Epicurus. An Introduction*, Cambridge 1972, 23f.

Gesprochene gleicht, was den ontologischen Charakter angeht, den „zufälligen Entstehungen des Seienden“³⁶. Wie sollte es da denkbar sein, daß die göttlichen Namen und besonders der des „Ungezeugten“ im Sinne der *Epinoia* gemeint seien, da Gott immer schon war und ist und sein wird der Ungewordene vor allem Werden des Seienden und unabhängig davon, ob die Menschen von ihm sprechen oder schweigen³⁷. Die Intention der eunomianischen Theologie, das göttliche Wesen und den Namen Gottes von allen Machwerken der menschlichen Vernunft freizuhalten, wird so nur dann verständlich, wenn man erkennt, daß nach Eunomius auch die Vernunfttätigkeit nichts anderes ist als eine Form naturhaften Geschehens, das sich nach epikureischer Überzeugung rein zufällig und blind vollzieht. Diese Geringschätzung der *Epinoia* verträgt sich zudem gut mit der neuplatonischen Ontologie, die die Grundlage der eunomianischen Theologie zu sein scheint³⁸. Denn auch bei Plotin z.B. wird die stoische Vorstellung von einer schöpferischen *Epinoia* vor dem Hintergrund der festen, hierarchischen Seinsstrukturen kritisiert und abgelehnt³⁹. In ähnlicher Weise erscheint auch bei Eunomius das Wirken der *Epinoia* gerade gegenüber der festen Ordnung des Seienden als das Zufällige. Auch die eunomianische Ablehnung der stoischen Lehre von den *σημαινόμενα* entspricht der epikureischen Interpretation der *Epinoia*, denn es waren ja gerade die Epikureer, die die Existenz der *Lekta* und der vom physischen Sein der Laute und Dinge verschiedenen *σημαινόμενα* in Zweifel gezogen haben⁴⁰.

III Die Sprachphilosophie des Gregor von Nyssa

A Der *Epinoia*-Begriff

Die Schrift *CE* des Gregor von Nyssa thematisiert nur vordergründig das spezielle theologische Problem der verschiedenen Namen Gottes. Hauptsächlich

36 *CE* II 410 (GNO I, 345,25 ff.). Entsprechend ist auch nach Epikur (Usener, fr. 335) das Benennen ein Werk der Natur, also zufällig.

37 *CE* II 159–160 (GNO I, 271,20 ff.).

38 Vgl. dazu E. Vandenbussche, „La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d'Eunomius, le technologue“, *RHE* 40 (1944/5) bes. 70 f.

39 Zur Entwicklung des *Epinoia*-Begriffs vgl. T. Kobusch, *Sein und Sprache. Historische Grundlegung einer Ontologie der Sprache*, Leiden 1987; Id., „Die *Epinoia* – Das menschliche Bewußtsein in der antiken Philosophie“, in: L. Karfiková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (ed.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies*, Leiden – Boston 2007, 3–20.

40 Vgl. *Epicurea* (Usener, fr. 259).

und vor allem geht es in dieser Schrift um die Stellung der menschlichen Vernunft überhaupt. Deswegen ist auch das spezielle Problem der sprachlichen Bezeichnung oder der Beziehung zwischen sprachlichen Zeichen und Dingen in einem umfassenden Horizont zu sehen. Man kann das Benennen, Bezeichnen oder schlicht das Sprechen nur dann als eine spezielle Vernunfttätigkeit verstehen, wenn man weiß, was Vernunft, menschliche Vernunft überhaupt ist. Wenn die *Epinoia* wie von Eunomius als eine bedeutungslose, gedankenlose, bloß das Widernatürliche sich ausdenkende Tätigkeit oder als ein bloß phantasierendes Vermögen und damit als ein für das Leben Nutzloses abgetan wird, ist – so wendet Gregor ein – das Menschliche des menschlichen Lebens gar nicht zu begreifen. Woher haben wir denn – so fragt Gregor in seinem Hohenlied auf die Vernunft⁴¹ – die Errungenschaften der Geometrie, der Arithmetik, der Logik und Physik, aber auch die Erfindungen der Maschinen und schließlich die Metaphysik in Form der Ontologie und der philosophischen Theologie? Sie alle beruhen ebenso auf der Tätigkeit menschlicher Vernunft wie auch die später, z. B. bei Hugo von St. Viktor, sogenannten knechtischen Künste wie z. B. Ackerbau und Schifffahrt. Kurzum: Die Vernunft erscheint in ihrer allgemeinsten Form als Stifterin der Kultur überhaupt, insofern Kultur das durch ein methodisches Wissen geformte Leben ist, wie das auch schon die hellenistischen Berichte über die Kulturentstehung expliziert haben⁴². In diesem Sinne definiert Gregor die *Epinoia* im Anschluß an aristotelische Vorstellungen als das „inventive methodisch gesicherte Wissen des Unbekannten“, das von einem intuitiv erfaßten ersten Gedanken ausgeht und das daraus Folgende mit dem ersten zusammenfügt⁴³. Diese Fähigkeit zu einem methodi-

41 CE II 181 (GNO I, 277,7 ff.).

42 Vgl. z. B. Diodor I 8 und Vitruv, *De architectura* 2 1,1, die auch in der genannten Diskussion im 18. Jh. im selben Zusammenhang öfter genannt werden. Zum Problem der philosophiegeschichtlichen Hintergründe dieser Berichte vgl. bes. W. Spoerri, *Späthellenistische Berichte über Welt, Kultur und Götter*, Basel 1959.

43 ἔφοδος εὐρετική τῶν ἀγνοουμένων (CE II 182 [GNO I, 277,21]) ist eine Anspielung auf die aristotelische Methode der *via inventionis* in der *Topik*, wo auch (I,12, 105a14) der Begriff der ἔφοδος in diesem Sinne verwendet wird. ἔφοδος kann freilich auch das methodische Wissen im Sinne des demonstrativen oder apodiktischen Wissens bedeuten, wie aus CE III/5 6 (GNO II, 162,10 ff.) hervorgeht, wo Gregor den Gedankengang des Eunomius als die falsch angewandten *Technai* der apodiktischen Methode verhöhnt. Gregor hat also bei seiner Bestimmung der *Epinoia* die syllogistische Methode vor Augen, nach der von in der *Noesis*, d. h. intuitiv erfaßten Sätzen ausgegangen und das Folgende damit verbunden wird. Auch Basilius hatte schon im selben Sinne die *Epinoia* als jenes reflexive Erfassen verstanden, das der „Intuition“ folgt (Basilius, CE I 6 [SC 299, 184; 186]), aber offenbar befolgt Basilius dabei eher die Methode der Begriffsanalyse oder die seit Albinos sogenannte divi-

schen Wissen im weitesten Sinne und damit die Sprachfähigkeit macht nach Gregor das Menschliche des Menschen aus. In der Rede von der Erschaffung des Menschen ist deswegen auch notwendigerweise die Verleihung dieser Vernunft mitausgedrückt. Es ist keine Epoche denkbar, in der es Menschen ohne Sprache, ohne Vernunft und ohne Kultur gegeben hätte. Demgegenüber hatte Eunomius die These vertreten, daß die ersten Menschen „in Unvernunft und Sprachlosigkeit zusammengelebt“ hätten, wenn Gott sie nicht die Namen der Dinge gelehrt hätte⁴⁴. Nun hat die von Gott dem Menschen verliehene Vernunft nach Gregor einen durchaus ambivalenten Charakter. Denn sie kann sich verfehlen. Gregor macht sich die These des Eunomius von der Nichtigkeit menschlicher Vernunft zunutze: gerade die Fähigkeit, das Wider- und Unnatürliche, das Phantastische und Unwahre auszusinnen, zeigt, daß die *Epinoia* uns eigentlich zu einem guten Zweck von Gott gegeben wurde. Sie ist wie die Freiheit selbst: der jeweilige Mißbrauch ist ein Beweis dafür, daß sie beide, die Vernunft wie die Freiheit, eigentlich notwendig und von unendlichem Nutzen für die Seele sind⁴⁵. In diesem Sinne sind auch nicht die Bezeichnungen der Dinge den Menschen von Gott unmittelbar verliehen worden, – Gott ist kein Schulmeister (γραμματίστης) – sondern die Freiheit, die Dinge, bzw. das über die Dinge Gedachte so oder anders zu bezeichnen, ist der menschlichen Vernunft von Natur aus mitgegeben⁴⁶. Deswegen sind auch nicht die Lebewesen „von oben“ mit bestimmten Bezeichnungen belegt worden, sondern Adam erhielt die ἐξουσία τῆς ὀνοματοποιίας⁴⁷. Da aber ein Handeln aus eigener Macht nach Gregor notwendig den „eigenen Willen“, also Freiheit voraussetzt, beruht die Namensgebung, ja sogar das menschliche Denken überhaupt auf Freiheit. Mit den Worten Gregors: „Das Denken (*epinoia*) ist eine Tätigkeit unserer Vernunft und ist von dem Entschluß (*prohairesis*) der Sprechenden abhängig und subsistiert nicht in sich selbst, sondern hat in dem Antrieb der Sprechenden seine Existenz“⁴⁸. Wenn Eunomius recht hätte mit seiner Behauptung, daß die Bezeichnung der Dinge nach einem Naturgesetz aus den Dingen selbst hervorkäme, müßten alle Menschen die gleiche Sprache sprechen. Die Verschiedenheit der Sprachen und die Möglichkeit einer Namensänderung sind für Gregor

sive Methode, – das zeigen auch die Begriffe διαιρούμενα oder διαλύων – durch die das bloß scheinbar „Einfache“ in seiner Vielfältigkeit aufgezeigt wird.

44 Vgl. CE II 398 (GNO I, 342,22 ff.).

45 CE II 187–191 (GNO I, 278,25–280,21).

46 Vgl. CE II 241; 396–397 (GNO I, 297,1; 342,10.20).

47 CE II 547 (GNO I, 386,13).

48 CE II 334 (GNO I, 323,29 ff.).

ein Beleg für seine These, „daß alles von uns benannt wird“⁴⁹ und daß das Benennen überhaupt dem „Willen derer, die die Dinge offenbar machen“, überlassen bleibt⁵⁰. Hier wird das menschliche Sprechen und Denken zum ersten Mal expressis verbis als Sache der Freiheit bezeichnet. Dementsprechend ist auch die Vielheit der Sprachen und das Verschiedenartige des Ausdrucks für dasselbe nach Gregor nicht mehr als Abfall von einer Ursprache, sondern als Ausdruck dieser von Gott geschenkten Freiheit zu interpretieren. Ein solches Verständnis von dem, was menschliche Sprache ausmacht, ist in der Tat – wie das A. Borst ausdrückte⁵¹ – „revolutionärer“ Natur.

B *Die Unterscheidung zwischen Lautgestalt, Bedeutung und Gegenstand.*

Die Lehre von der Sprache ist – so war es im Vorhergehenden dargestellt worden – in einer Philosophie der Freiheit begründet, nach der Gott den Menschen als freies Wesen, mithin auch den freien Gebrauch der Vernunft und der Sprache will. Vor diesem Hintergrund wird die Rezeption der stoischen Sprachlehre erst recht verständlich, durch die die Widerlegung des Eunomius im engeren Sinne möglich wird. Gregors Hauptargument gegenüber Eunomius besteht in dem peinlichen Auseinanderhalten der drei Seinsbereiche des lautlichen Sprechens, des durch die Laute Bedeuteten und der Gegenstände, die gemeint sind. Während Gott als Schöpfer den Dingen ihre Existenz verliehen hat, muß der Mensch als Urheber ihrer Namen angesehen werden⁵². Und zwar wird die äußere Benennung nicht blindlings geschaffen oder unmittelbar von den Naturdingen genommen, sondern jede Form der äußeren Rede hat ihren

49 CE III/5 51 (GNO II, 179,1).

50 CE II 546 (GNO I, 385,28–386,2).

51 A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel*, Bd. I, Stuttgart 1957, 244; vgl. 249.

52 CE II 439 (GNO I, 355,2); vgl. auch CE II 246 (GNO I, 298,11), wo das Ding in seiner realen, d.h. von unserem Bewußtsein unabhängigen Existenz (τὸ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ὄν πρᾶγμα) als „Werk“ des Schöpfers bezeichnet wird, wohingegen – so muß man implizit mitverstehen – das κατ' ἐπίνοιαν ὄν des Menschen Werk ist. Der stoische Hintergrund dieser Begriffe ist E. Mühlenberg, „Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern Contra Eunomium“, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du Colloque de Chevetogne*, Leiden 1971, offenbar entgangen, der Seite 242 vage auf die „allgemeine platonisch-aristotelische Tradition“ hinweist, in der der Begriff der *Epinoia* terminologisch aber nicht vorkommt. Zur Geschichte dieses Begriffs vgl. T. Kobusch, „Die philosophische Bedeutung des Kirchenvaters Origenes: zur christlichen Kritik an der Einseitigkeit der griechischen Wesensphilosophie“, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 165 (1985) 94–105; Id., *Sein und Sprache. Historische Grundlegung einer Ontologie der Sprache*, Leiden 1987.

bestimmenden Grund in dem entsprechenden „Gedanken“ (*Noema*) im „Herzen“ des Menschen⁵³. Die Notwendigkeit der lautlichen Rede liegt ihrerseits darin begründet, daß der Mensch auch Körperwesen ist und es zum Proprium der inkorporierten Natur gehört, die „Gedanken des Herzens“ durch Worte kundzutun⁵⁴. Die äußere Rede des Menschen ist immer ein diskursiver Logos (διεξοδικὸς λόγος), der, wie auch die Stoiker gelehrt haben⁵⁵, bestimmter sinnlicher Teile bedarf, damit er geäußert werden kann, nämlich z. B. der Luftröhren, der Zunge, der Zähne, des Mundes, ja selbst die Wangen sind Mitarbeiter am Werk des Logos⁵⁶. Hier ist noch deutlich die stoische Lehre erkennbar, nach der sich der Geist bis zu den Stimmwerkzeugen erstreckt⁵⁷.

Diese zeitlich-körperliche Bedingtheit des menschlichen Sprechens zu beachten, ist von äußerster Wichtigkeit. Denn nur so kann nach Gregor verständlich gemacht werden, daß der Gebrauch der Sprache oder, wie Gregor gleichbedeutend sagen kann, die Manifestierung des Gedachten in mündlicher oder schriftlicher Form stets begrenzter, endlicher Natur ist⁵⁸. Wenn Eunomius die Agennesie als ein der *Epinoia* prinzipiell entzogenes Wesensprädikat Gottes ansieht mit dem Hinweis, daß Gott schon immer, vor jeder *Epinoia*, „ungezeugt war und sein wird“, dann hat er nach Gregor gerade diese universale Begrenztheit unseres Sprechens nicht beachtet. Auch die Agennesie ist nämlich eine Bezeichnung, deren Existenz so flüchtig und schnelllebig ist wie diejenige aller anderen Laute auch⁵⁹. Sie ist darüber hinaus als „Name“ ein „Redeteil“ wie andere auch. Ein solcher Name ist schlechterdings von der Existenz dessen, der den Namen gibt oder gebraucht, abhängig. Denn die Namen gelten ja für den Menschen, insofern er eine endliche, körperliche, zeitbedingte Existenz besitzt. „Nicht um Gottes willen, sondern unserer wegen sind die Namen zur Manifestierung des Seienden ausgedacht (ἐπιτενότηται)“. Durch eine solche endlichkeitsbedingte Benennung wird aber das zu Benennende, also z. B. die göttliche Natur selbst; gar nicht in Mitleidenschaft gezogen, denn das „Ausgesagt werden ist nicht identisch mit dem Sein“⁶⁰. Die äußere Rede oder Bezeichnung ist vielmehr als der „Künder“ oder „Bote“ der Tätigkeit des Geistes und des inne-

53 Vgl. CE I 540 (GNO I, 182,24).

54 CE II 207 (GNO I, 285,17 ff.).

55 Vgl. z. B. SVF II, 144.

56 CE II 200 (GNO I, 283,13 ff.); vgl. auch *Op hom* IX (PG 44, 149Bff.).

57 Vgl. SVF II, 836.

58 CE II 207 (GNO I, 285,20).

59 CE II 44 (GNO I, 239,1 ff.).

60 CE II 158–175 (GNO I, 271–275); Zitate: GNO I, 273,25; vgl. auch GNO I, 309 und GNO I, 271,29; vgl. auch GNO I, 268,25.

ren Resultates, des *Noemas*, anzusehen. Der Name als äußere Rede „enthüllt“ das Gedachte⁶¹. Der Name ist nun aber nicht nur in der Form der Lautgestalt ein Begrenztes, sondern vor allem auch als Repräsentant des Gedachten selbst. Jeder äußeren Bezeichnung entspricht ein Bezeichnetes (*σημαινόμενον*)⁶². Der stoische Begriff des *σημαινόμενον* bezeichnet einen eigenen Seinsbereich neben dem der Laute und der Dinge. Im Unterschied zu diesen beiden ist das *σημαινόμενον* wesentlich geistiger, unkörperlicher Natur. Es ist das von der Sache Gemeinte, das Gedachte als solches, das Gedankending⁶³. Gregor bezeichnet es auch sehr oft mit dem aristotelischen Begriff des *Noema*⁶⁴. Als *Noema* ist das Bezeichnete das innere Resultat des Denkens. Schließlich ist mit diesen beiden Begriffen gleichbedeutend der der *ἐμφασις*, d.h. der Bedeutung eines Wortes. Der Begriff der *Emphasis*, der zunächst das Sein eines sinnlich Dargestellten, z.B. eines Spiegelbildes, aber auch die Erscheinung eines Regenbogens bezeichnet, muß hier – wie in der Rhetorik – als das geistige Dargestelltsein eines Wortes, eben als seine „Bedeutung“ aufgefaßt werden. *Emphasis* ist das, als was dem geistigen Auge der zu erkennende Gegenstand erscheint, was er also für den Betrachter für eine Bedeutung hat⁶⁵. In diesem Sinne hat auch jede äußere Bezeichnung eine eigene Bedeutung⁶⁶. Um das deutlich zu machen, greift Gregor auf das schon von seinem Bruder gebrauchte Beispiel des Weizens (*σίτος*) zurück. Seiner realen Existenz nach ist er ein Ding, das je nach seinen verschiedenen Eigentümlichkeiten als Same (*σπόρος*) oder Frucht

61 Vgl. *CE* III/9 37 (GNO II, 278,8 ff.) und *CE* III/9 40 (GNO II, 279,12 ff.).

62 Vgl. z.B. *CE* II 28 (GNO I, 234,19–20): ἑκατέρῳ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἰδὼν τι τὸ σημαινόμενον ὕπαστι.

63 In *CE* III/194 (GNO II, 36,1 ff.) weist Gregor darauf hin, daß die Proprietät der göttlichen Personen nicht durch die lautliche Gestalt der Wörter, sondern nur in den „Dingen“ erkennbar sei, wobei unter „Dingen“ „das als für sich bestehende Gedachte“ zu verstehen ist, wenn die göttlichen Personen einmal so genannt werden dürfen. Damit ist natürlich nicht gesagt, daß die göttlichen Personen nur Gedankendinge seien. „Wer könnte“ in der Tat „so verrückt sein, von dem wirklich Seienden ... zu sagen, er sei nicht im Sinne eigener Existenz, sondern stelle nur den Gedanken eines Namens dar?“ (*CE* II 172 [GNO I, 275,4]).

64 Vgl. z.B. *CE* III/9 4 (GNO II, 265,19).

65 Zum Begriff der *Emphasis* im Sinne des sinnlichen Erscheinens vgl. z.B. Gregor, *Beat* v (GNO VII/2, 130); er ist vorgeprägt in der aristotelisch-stoischen Tradition, z.B. bei Poseidonios, *Fr.* 121 und *Fr.* 15 (ed. L. Edelstein – J.G. Kidd, Cambridge 1972), wo er, wie der *Epinoia*-Begriff im Gegensatz zum *Hypostasis*-Begriff steht. Auch die Bedeutung des Wortes *Emphasis* im Sinne der „Bedeutung“ eines Wortes scheint stoischen Ursprungs zu sein, vgl. Tryphon, *Tropoi* (ed. L. Spengel, *Rhet.* III 192,1); Agatharchides, *Fragmenta Historica* 21 (GGM, 120).

66 *CE* II 30 (GNO I, 235,15): ... ἰδὼν ἐμφασιν ἑκάτερα τῶν ὀνομάτων ἔχει. Vgl. auch *CE* II 105 (GNO I, 257,14 ff.) und *Abl* (GNO III/1, 43,17 ff.).

oder Nahrung aufgefaßt und bezeichnet werden kann⁶⁷. Durch dieses Beispiel veranschaulicht Gregor den Grundgedanken seiner Sprachphilosophie: der Mensch kann etwas immer nur in bestimmter Hinsicht oder im Hinblick auf ein bestimmtes Bezeichnetes und somit immer nur in einer begrenzten Bedeutung erfassen⁶⁸. Dies besagt nicht, daß einem Namen immer nur ein Bezeichnetes entsprechen müsse. Aber jeder Name bezieht sich auf ein Eigentümliches in der Sache, so daß ihm auch ein „eigentümliches“ Bezeichnetes entsprechen muß, wenngleich er auch noch anderes mitbezeichnen kann. So „offenbart der Name des Vaters zwar auch das eigentümlich von einem solchen Wort Bezeichnete, ich meine die Tatsache, daß er seinen Sohn gezeugt hat, er zeigt aber auch an, daß keine Ursache vor dem Vater im wirklichen Sinne gedacht wird“⁶⁹. Ebenso muß nach Gregor jeder Name eines Seienden in seiner „eigentümlichen Bedeutung“ erfaßt werden. Wird jedoch z. B. das Ungezeugte mit dem Unvergänglichen und das Endlose mit dem Anfanglosen hinsichtlich der Bedeutung leichtsinnigerweise – wie von Eunomius – gleichgesetzt, dann vermengt sich alles miteinander in bezug auf den Bereich der Bedeutung und des Gedachten, so daß Denken gar nicht mehr möglich ist⁷⁰. In diesem Sinne ist auch die Agennesie ein Name, der nur den Unterschied im Bereich des Gedankens, also das *Noema* des Ungezeugtseins, und damit ein Eigentümliches anzeigt, nicht aber das Wesen selbst⁷¹.

Nun hat es mit dem Begriff der Agennesie und des „Vaters“ noch etwas Besonderes auf sich. Der Name des Vaters – so sagten wir mit Gregor – offenbart ein *Proprium*, nämlich das Ungezeugtsein, und Gregor bewegt sich auch hier im Begriffsfeld der Stoiker⁷². Aber dieses *Proprium* kann in zweifachem Sinne verstanden werden: zugleich wird nämlich beim Begriff des „Vaters“ auch seine Beziehung zu seinem Sohn mitgedacht. Beides, das Ungezeugtsein und das Gezeugthaben wird durch das Wort „Vater“ angezeigt, wenn auch mit Bezug auf verschiedene *σημαίνόμενα*, denn der eine Gedanke ist inhaltlich nicht zugleich

67 CE II 352 (GNO I, 329,4 ff.).

68 Vgl. CE I 560 (GNO I, 188,13); CE I 599 (GNO I, 199,1).

69 CE I 611 (GNO I, 202,28).

70 CE II 474 (GNO I, 364,26). Zum Begriff der *ἰδιόζουσα ἔμφασις* vgl. auch CE II 518 (GNO I, 377,28); *Ref Eun* 6 (GNO II, 315,6). Zur Unvertauschbarkeit der Bedeutungen vgl. auch CE II 24; 480 (GNO I, 233,20; 366,14).

71 CE II 34 (GNO I, 236,18).

72 Der Name bezeichnet nach CE II 271–277 (GNO I, 306–307) die Qualität oder die Gesamtheit der Qualitäten einer Sache. Zum stoischen Hintergrund vgl. T. Borsche, „Name“, in: J. Ritter – K. Gründer (Hg.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Bd. 6, Basel 1984, 372 ff. Dieser ist auch bei den Grammatikern erkennbar, wie schon L. Lersch, *Die Sprachphilosophie der Alten*, II, Bonn 1840, 77; 112 f. gesehen hat.

der andere⁷³. Um diese doppelte Bedeutung des Wortes „Vater“ verdeutlichen zu können, bezieht sich Gregor wie schon sein Bruder auf eine wohl- und allbekannte Lehre, nach der zwischen „absoluten“ und „relativen“ Bezeichnungen zu unterscheiden ist. Diese Unterscheidung stammt offenbar aus der Grammatiktheorie⁷⁴. Daneben gibt es aber auch Ausdrücke, die im Hinblick auf diese Unterscheidung ambivalenter Natur sind, weil man sie sowohl in ihrer Unbezüglichkeit wie in ihrer Beziehung zu anderen betrachten kann. Zu diesen Ausdrücken gehört auch das Wort „Vater“, das somit durchaus zwei verschiedene *σημαινόμενα* als das eine Proprium bezeichnen kann, nämlich das Ungezeugtsein und die Beziehung zum gezeugten Sohn.

c *Epinoia und Gotteserkenntnis*

Gregor verfolgt mit seiner Sprachlehre gegenüber Eunomius besonders zwei Ziele: nämlich einerseits die Begrenztheit menschlicher Vernunft und andererseits das Bedeutungserfüllte der menschlichen Sprache und damit ihre Wahrheitsfähigkeit aufzuzeigen. Nirgendwo wird das deutlicher erkennbar als in seiner Lehre von der Gotteserkenntnis. Auch hier gibt es keine andere Möglichkeit und „Weise“ des Erkennens als die der *Epinoia*. Das zeigt vor allem die Christologie. Die vielen Namen, die wir, gestützt auf die Schrift, dem Gottessohn geben, können nicht sein Wesen bezeichnen, sonst wäre die göttliche Natur „vielartig“ und zusammengesetzt. Niemand aber wird andererseits wagen, die Bezeichnungen für völlig ungültig und unbedeutend zu halten. So bleibt auch hier nur die Möglichkeit, die vielen Bezeichnungen dem einen göttlichen Sohn im Sinne der *Epinoia* zuzuordnen⁷⁵.

73 *CE I* 567 (GNO I, 190,9 ff.).

74 Vgl. z. B. *CE I* 190,19 ff., ähnlich schon Basilius *CE II* 9 (SC 305, 36). Die relativen Namen (πρός τι) drücken nach Gregor eine bestimmte Beziehung zu etwas aus. Sie beziehen sich auf ein ihnen Entsprechendes. So ist z. B. im Begriff „Demiurg“ die Beziehung zur Schöpfung, im Begriff „Knecht“ die Beziehung zum Herrn, im Namen „Sohn“ die zum Vater ausgedrückt. In diesem Sinne haben auch der Begriff des γένημα und des ποίημα je ihre hauptsächliche Bedeutung darin, daß sie die Beziehung zum „Erzeuger“ und zum „Schöpfer“ anzeigen. So muß man, wenn die Vermischung der Dinge durch die Vertauschung der Namen vermieden werden soll, „jedem der relativ Ausgesagten das eigentümlich Mitbedeutete bewahren“ (*CE III*/2 108 [GNO II, 88,14]). Zum grammatiktheoretischen Hintergrund der Unterscheidung vgl. z. B. Dionysius Thrax, *Ars Grammatica* (ed. G. Uhlig, *Grammatici Graeci* I,1, Lipsiae 1883, § 12,23): Ἀπολελυμένον δέ ἐστιν (scil. ὄνομα) ὃ καθ' ἑαυτὸ νοεῖται, ὡς ὁ θεός, λόγος. § 12,4: Πρὸς τι ἔχον δέ ἐστιν ὡς πατήρ, υἱός, φίλος, δέξις. dazu auch L. Lersch, *Die Sprachphilosophie der Alten*, II, 86.

75 Vgl. *CE II* 302–304 (GNO I, 315,10–23). Auch nach *Vit Moys II* (GNO VII/1, 92,12) bezeichnen die Christusnamen „Arzt“, „Hirte“, „Weinstock“ usw. das Göttliche κατά τι σημαινόμενον.

Ähnliches gilt aber auch von den vielen Namen, die sich auf das göttliche Wesen beziehen. Da der Mensch nur das, was er erkennt, durch eine Namensnennung bezeichnen kann, das Göttliche aber jenseits seiner Erkenntnis ist, kann er nach Gregor keine Benennung finden, die das göttliche Wesen eigentlich und „in hinreichender Weise“ repräsentiert, sondern muß mithilfe vieler verschiedener Namen seine Gedanken über das Göttliche auszudrücken suchen⁷⁶. Dies macht die Besonderheit metaphysischer Erkenntnis aus, daß sie nicht in der Weise wie andere Erkenntnisse eindeutig und allgemein ist, sondern – soweit es möglich ist – das Gedachte, verstanden als den unserem Geiste immanenten Begriff, kundtut und sich approximativ durch die „Bedeutung“ der Wörter auf den intelligiblen Gegenstand zubewegt⁷⁷. Dagegen sind die Sinneserkenntnis und alle Erkenntnisse, die das konkrete ethische oder politische Leben betreffen, von einer derartigen „Ambiguität“ (ἀμφιβολία) ganz frei. In der Tat erkennen wir ja alle in gleicher Weise, was für eine Farbe oder was für einen Aggregatzustand ein bestimmter Körper hat, weil wir alle „an derselben Natur teilhaben“⁷⁸.

Die metaphysische Erkenntnis der konkreten sinnfälligen Dinge ist allerdings genauso unsicher wie die metaphysische Erkenntnis des göttlichen Wesens. In diesem Zusammenhang ist es philosophiehistorisch gesehen hochbedeutsam, daß Gregor die Möglichkeit und den Sinn der Wesensbestimmung als solcher – und nicht nur im Hinblick auf das göttliche Wesen – bezweifelt und in Frage gestellt hat. Die Propheten und Patriarchen z. B. haben sich um eine Wesensbestimmung der Dinge, über die sie sprachen (z. B. Himmel, Erde, Meer, Zeiten, Ewigkeit usw.), ja um metaphysische Bestimmungen überhaupt, nicht gekümmert⁷⁹. Das Ziel der traditionellen Metaphysik, das zugrunde liegende Wesen einer erscheinenden Sache theoretisch zu erkennen, nachdem sie durch die abstrahierende Vernunft in ihre Bestandteile aufgelöst und ihrer Qualitäten „beraubt“ wurde, ist nach Gregor eine höchst fragwürdige Angelegenheit. Was soll denn z. B. als die Wesensbestimmung des Körpers noch übrigbleiben, wenn die Farbe, Gestalt, Widerständigkeit, Schwere, Größe, Ortsbestimmung,

76 Vgl. CE II 577 (GNO I, 394,27–395,3).

77 CE II 574 (GNO I, 394,4): ... ἐγγίζοντες ὡς ἐνι μάλιστα τῇ δυνάμει τῶν νοηθέντων διὰ τῆς τῶν ῥημάτων ἐμφάσεως.

78 Vgl. CE II 572 (GNO I, 393,19 ff.). Ibid., (GNO I, 393,29) ist eine Anspielung auf die Disziplinen der Politik und Ethik. Die θεωρία τῆς νοερᾶς φύσεως ist natürlich die Metaphysik, für die sonst der Terminus ἐποπτεία gebraucht wird, auch von Gregor anspielungsweise in CE II 585 (GNO I, 397,8) u. ö. Vgl. dazu T. Kobusch, „Metaphysik“ in: J. Ritter – K. Gründer (Hg.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Bd. 5, Basel 1984, 1188–1217.

79 Vgl. CE II 100 ff. (GNO I, 256).

Bewegung usw. abstrahiert sind? Tatsächlich erkennt der Mensch ja auch in seiner Lebenswelt die Dinge, z.B. die Elemente, nur insofern sie ihm in seinem Leben in irgendeiner Weise nützlich sind. „Ihre Wesensbestimmung aber haben wir weder gelernt, noch haben wir einen Schaden davon, daß wir sie nicht kennen.“ Das Forschen nach dem verborgenen Wesen der Dinge im Sinne der theoretischen Neugierde (πολυπραγμοσύνη) hat nach Gregor keinen Nutzen für das Leben. Weil die Wesenserkenntnis überflüssig und unnütz ist, spielt sie auch in der Heiligen Schrift keine Rolle⁸⁰. Wenn nun aber der Mensch nicht das Wesen der Dinge erkennen kann und auch nicht das Wesen der eigenen Seele, wie sollte er dann das, was über ihm ist, dem Wesen nach erkennen können⁸¹. Ganz ähnlich heißt es am Schluß der VII *Oratio* zum *Ecclesiastes*: „Denn nach meiner Rede hat sich die Schöpfung noch nicht selbst erkannt und hat auch nicht erfaßt, welches das Wesen der Seele ist, welcher Art die Natur des Körpers, woher das Seiende, wie sich die Entstehungen auseinander vollziehen, wie das Nichtseiende zum Sein gelangt, wie das Seiende sich in das Nichtseiende auflöst, ... Wenn nun die Schöpfung sich selbst nicht erkennt, wie sollte sie das, was über ihr ist, erklären können?“⁸². Damit ist auch die Grenze der sprachbegabten Vernunft angezeigt. Das unendliche göttliche Wesen entzieht sich schlechterdings allen Benennungen durch die menschliche *Epinoia*⁸³. Es gibt nach Gregor keine von Natur aus gemäße Bezeichnung für das göttliche Wesen, die es in hinreichender Weise darstellen könnte⁸⁴, es sei denn jenes προσφύς ὄνομα des Apostels, das besagt, daß Gott über jedem Namen erhaben ist, weil er der wahrhaft und eigentlich Seiende ist⁸⁵.

Das göttliche Wesen ist auf diese Weise der *Epinoia*, insofern sie sprachbegabte Vernunft ist, unerreichbar. Denn als sprachbegabte Vernunft ist die *Epinoia* in ihrem Wesen „vielgeschäftig“ oder neugierig. Die *Polypragmosyne* kennzeichnet die endliche Vernunft in ihrer Hast nach dem stets Neuen und Anderen und somit als der Welt der Vielheit zugehörig. Die Neugier ist zwar

80 CE II 116 (GNO I, 259,28–260). Einen parallelen Gedankengang enthält *Op hom* XXIV (PG 44, 212D–213B).

81 CE II 117 (GNO I, 260,6): ὁ δ' ἑαυτὸν ἀγνοῶν πῶς ἂν τι τῶν ὑπὲρ ἑαυτὸν ἐπιγνοίη;

82 *Ecll* VII (GNO V, 416,1ff.). Zur Interpretation dieser *Oratio* vgl. auch E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, Göttingen 1966; 185 ff.

83 Vgl. CE III/1 103 (GNO II, 38,20): οὐκ ἔστι τὸ ἀρίστον κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐπινοία τινὶ ῥημάτων διαληφθῆναι. Ähnlich auch *Beat* VI (GNO VII/2, 140).

84 CE II 577 (GNO I, 394,32). Vgl. auch *Beat* VI (GNO VII/2, 149,21): πλέον ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἔμφασιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἔστι τὸ δηλούμενον oder *Cant* VI (GNO VI, 181,21).

85 CE II 587 (GNO I, 397,27); vgl. CE III/5 53 (GNO II, 279,20 ff.).

der Antrieb, das in dieser Welt jeweils schon Erkannte hinter sich zu lassen und weiter fortzuschreiten in der Erkenntnis der Dinge dieser Welt, aber das göttliche Wesen selbst ist dieser Neugierde nicht zugänglich⁸⁶. Diese neugierige *Epinoia* ist nichts anderes als das endliche Wissen im aristotelischen Sinne. Denn offenkundig gebraucht Gregor den Begriff der *Polypragmosyne* im selben Sinne wie Plotin, der sie als das logische, d. h. das sich in Prämissen und Konklusionen entfaltende Wissen versteht, welches selbst in gewissem Sinne als Vorstufe des wahren Wissens anzusehen ist⁸⁷. Nach Gregor kann dieses logische, methodische Wissen der *Epinoia* uns hienieden zwar nur einen „Schatten“ vom Göttlichen vermitteln, aber dies ist doch gleichwohl schon eine große Wohltat für die Seele⁸⁸. Durch dieses Wissen erkennt der Mensch allenfalls, daß das göttliche Wesen unerkennbar und unsagbar ist. Zwar liegt es im Wesen der neugierigen Vernunft danach zu suchen, mit welchen endlichen Begriffen sie die „unnahbare und hohe Natur“ Gottes „berühren“ könnte, aber so erfährt sie nur, daß diese über alle Begriffe erhaben ist⁸⁹. Daraus ergibt sich aber, – und Gregor hat es ausdrücklich hervorgehoben⁹⁰ – daß das erfüllte und Seligkeit gewährende Sichausstrecken der Seele nach der Erkenntnis des Göttlichen nicht im Sinne eines Fortschreitens des neugierigen Wissens verstanden werden kann. Das ständige Weitereindringen in das göttliche Wesen, das nach Gregor das Eigentliche der Glückseligkeit ausmacht, kann somit nicht als ein Fortschreiten der sprachlich begabten, diskursiven, neugierigen, methodisch vorwärtsgehenden Vernunft angesehen werden. Denn die neugierige *Epinoia* ist in ihrem Wesen endlich. Die Endlichkeit zeigt sich darin, daß – obwohl sie ständig auf der Suche nach den vielen, immer neuen Begriffen für die vielen Dinge ist – ihre Tätigkeit doch zum Stillstand kommt und sie selbst zu einer scheinbaren Befriedigung, wenn sie einen Begriff gefunden hat, durch den sie eine bestimmte Sache erfaßt (*καταληπτική ἐπίνοια*). Die wahre Erfüllung für die Seele ist demgegenüber aber – nach Gregor – das ständige Suchen, das Nichtstehenbleiben⁹¹. Jenseits der *Epinoia* erhebt sich die Seele ständig zu einem

86 *Cant XI* (GNO VI, 334,15): ... περαιτέρω προελθεῖν διὰ τῆς πολυπραγμοσύνης τέως οὐ δύναται, ... vgl. auch *Beat III* (GNO VII/2, 105,1): ὡς ἀμήχανον ὅν τὸ τοιοῦτον ὑπὸ κατάληψιν ἐλθεῖν, πολυπραγμονοῦντες μαυνώμεθα, ...

87 Vgl. Plotin, *Ennead I* 3,4,18 ff. Auch nach Gregor von Nyssa, *Vit Moys II* (GNO VII/1, 87,1–6) muß alles, was die „vielgeschäftige“ *Dianoia* erfaßt, zurückgelassen werden, wenn der „Geist“ das Unschaubare schaut.

88 Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Inscr II, XIV* (GNO V, 156,3).

89 Vgl. *CE II* 138 (GNO I, 265,27 ff.).

90 Vgl. *Cant XI* (GNO VI, 334,15 ff.).

91 In *Cant XII* (GNO VI, 352,16 ff.). Eunomius hat diesen Unterschied nicht erkannt. Gregor

neuen Leben, indem sie den Tod erlebt gegenüber dem schon Erreichten und Gefundenen.⁹² Nachdem sie den Bereich des methodischen Denkens verlassen hat⁹³, erhebt sie sich zum „Suprarationalen“, wo ihr Hören und Sehen, aber auch das Sprechen, Benennen und Aussagen vergeht. Der Rest ist Schweigen. Denn wenn die Seele in jenen Bereich jenseits des Logos und der *Epinoia* gelangt, dann ist der Augenblick wortloser Verehrung gekommen⁹⁴.

Am Ende der Sprachphilosophie des Gregor von Nyssa steht somit der Hinweis auf das mystische Schweigen. Es sollte nicht das letzte Mal in der Geschichte der Philosophie sein, – das lehrt uns ein Blick auf Wittgenstein – daß eine Sprachphilosophie mit dem mystischen Schweigen endet.

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kritisiert an seiner Position eben dies, ὥστε καὶ εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς καταληπτικῆς ἐφόδου ὑπερεκτείνεσθαι (CE I 218 [GNO I, 90,8]).

- 92 *Cant* XII (GNO VI, 366,20 ff.). Zur Interpretation vgl. T. Kobusch, „Freiheit und Tod. Die Tradition der ‚mors mystica‘ und ihre Vollendung in Hegels Philosophie“, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 164 (1984) bes. 189 f.
- 93 Vgl. *Cant* VI (GNO VI, 183,6): ... παρελθοῦσα πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῇ κτίσει νοούμενον καὶ πᾶσαν καταληπτικὴν ἔφοδον καταλιποῦσα, ...; ähnlich auch *Cant* XII (GNO VI, 357,10 ff.) oder auch *Eccl* VII (GNO V, 413,1): καὶ τὰ μὲν γινωσκόμενα πάντα διὰ τῆς πολυπραγμοσύνης παρέδραμε, ...
- 94 Vgl. *Eccl* VII (GNO V, 414,9): ὅταν ἔλθῃ εἰς τὰ ὑπὲρ λόγον ὁ λόγος, γίνεται τότε καιρὸς τοῦ σιγᾶν ... vgl. auch *Eccl* VII (GNO V, 415,18) und *Cant* XI (GNO VI, 334,17 ff.); ferner CE II 105 (GNO I, 257,22): ... σιωπῇ τιμᾶσθαι und CE III/1 105 (GNO II, 39,4): ἐπεὶ οὖν κρείττον ἔστι καὶ ὑψηλότερον τῆς ὀνομαστικῆς σημασίας τὸ θεῖον, σιωπῇ τιμᾶν τὰ ὑπὲρ λόγον τε καὶ διάνοιαν μεμαθήκαμεν

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Die biblische Argumentation Gregors von Nyssa im ersten Buch *Contra Eunomium**

Hubertus R. Drobner

I Die bibeltheologischen Kapitel in *Contra Eunomium* I

Das 14. Kapitel des ersten Buches *Contra Eunomium* (1155–160)¹ versieht Gregor von Nyssa selbst mit der Überschrift: „Daß er (*sc.* Eunomios) übel handelte, als er die Heilslehre darlegte und dabei nicht die traditionellen Namen Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist verwendete, sondern auch andere Namen benutzte, ganz nach eigenem Belieben“². Es handelt sich dabei nach einem langen wörtlichen Zitat aus der *Apologia apologiae* des Eunomios³ um das erste von insgesamt sechzehn Kapiteln⁴, in denen Gregor beabsichtigt, die vorgetragenen irrigen Lehren des Eunomios der Reihe nach zu widerlegen⁵.

In Kap. 14 geht es um die grundsätzliche hermeneutische Frage, ob es zulässig sei, anstelle der in der Bibel überlieferten Gottesnamen „Vater, Sohn und

* Editor's note: This contribution is an updated version of H.R. Drobner, „Die biblische Argumentation Gregors von Nyssa im ersten Buch *Contra Eunomium*“, in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El „Contra Eunomium I“ en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 285–301.

1 GNO I, 73,16–75,12 = SC 524,12,59–16,39.

2 GNO I, 4,17–20. Zu Gregors Autorschaft der Überschriften des ersten Buches vgl. ebd. 3 *app. crit.*; R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse. Contre Eunome I,1–146* (SC 521), Paris 2008, 57 f.

3 CE I 151–154 (GNO I, 71,28–73,15 = SC 524,10,26–12,59 = Vaggione 102); vgl. L. Abramowski, „Eunomios“, *RAC* 6 (1966) 936–947, hier: 940; H.C. Brennecke, „Nachträge zum Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (RAC). Stellenkonkordanz zum Artikel Eunomios (RAC 6 [1966] 936/47)“, *JAC* 18 (1975) 202–205, hier: 202.

4 Kap. 14–29 = CE I 155–438 (GNO I, 73,16–154,1 = SC 524,12,59–198,149). Das Ende der Abhandlung fehlt, da die Handschriften eine größere Lücke aufweisen, die das Ende von Kapitel 29, Kapitel 30 ganz und den größeren Teil von Kapitel 31 umfaßt. Gregor dürfte darin die Behandlung des Zitates CE I 151–154 beendet, wahrscheinlich ein neues Stück aus der *Apologia apologiae* des Eunomios zitiert und dessen Besprechung begonnen haben. Petros Kallinikos, *Contra Damianum* XXI (CCG 35,44,204–219) und XLIX (CCG 54,418,107–422,149 – mit engl. Übersetzung) hat davon zwei Fragmente aus Kapitel 30 in syrischer Übersetzung bewahrt [vgl. R. Winling, SC 521, 60; SC 524, 198 mit Anm. 1–2, 357 f.: Textstücke in französischer Übersetzung. Texte in deutscher Übersetzung siehe Textanhang am Ende].

5 CE I 155 (GNO I, 73,19 = SC 524,12,63–64): τὰ εἰρημένα καθεξῆς ἀναλάβωμεν.

Heiliger Geist“ näherhin paraphrasierende bzw. definierende Begriffe zu setzen. „Er (sc. Eunomios) sagte“, zitiert Gregor, „daß der volle Sinn seiner Lehraussagen darin erreicht werde, daß er von einem höchsten und absolut ursprünglichen Wesen ausgehe, sowie einem Wesen, das zwar aufgrund des ersten existiere, das aber nach jenem vor allen anderen den ersten Platz einnehme, und einem dritten – sagt er jedenfalls –, das in keiner Hinsicht mit den beiden anderen auf gleicher Stufe stehe, sondern dem einem wegen seines Ursprungs, dem anderen aber wegen seiner Wirkweise untergeordnet sei“⁶. Eunomios vertritt also bezüglich der Trinität, wie im Arianismus üblich⁷, ein streng subordinatianistisches Schema, in dem der Vater allein als das höchste und absolut ursprüngliche Wesen anzusehen sei (ἀνωτάτη καὶ κυριωτάτη οὐσία)⁸ und ihm allein der Titel „wahrer Gott“ zustehe (ἀληθινὸς θεός)⁹, weil er allein ohne Ursprung sei (αἰτία), das heißt ungezeugt (ἀγέννητος)¹⁰. Der Sohn sei dem Vater in erster Linie untergeordnet (ὑποτάσσεται), weil er in ihm seinen Ursprung habe (αἰτία), das heißt vom Vater gezeugt sei (γεννητός)¹¹. Da der Sohn aber als erstes Wesen, vor aller Schöpfung und vor aller Zeit, gezeugt sei, sei er zwar Geschöpf (κτισθεὶς)¹², nehme aber vor allen anderen Geschöpfen den ersten Platz/Rang ein (πρωτεύων)¹³. Ja, es verhält sich nach Eunomios sogar so, daß der Vater, aus dem alles hervorgehe (ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα; vgl. 1 Kor 8,6), alles durch seinen Sohn erschaffe (δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα; vgl. ebd.). Auch der Heilige Geist sei deshalb durch das Wirken des Sohnes geschaffen (ἐνεργείᾳ τοῦ υἱοῦ γενόμενον)¹⁴,

6 CE I 155 (GNO I, 73,20–26 = SC 524,12,63–68).

7 Vgl. z.B. E. Bouland, *L'hérésie d'Arius et la « foi » de Nicée. Première partie: L'hérésie d'Arius*, Paris 1972, 67–81; M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, Roma 1975, 43–76; Th.A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 2 vols, Philadelphia 1979; R. Williams, *Arius. Heresy and Tradition*, London 1987, 95–116; R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy 318–381*, Edinburgh 1988, 3–18, 99–128, 598–636; Th. Böhm, *Die Christologie des Arius. Dogmengeschichtliche Überlegungen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hellenisierungsfrage*, St. Ottilien 1991, 125–174.

8 GNO I, 73,21 (= SC 524, 12,64); 75,18 (= SC 524, 18,6); 76,6–7 (= SC 524, 20,22); 79,1–2 (= SC 524, 26,99–100); 148,16 (= SC 524, 184,91); 159,23 (= SC 524, 210,95–96); 161,21 (= SC 524, 216,46).

9 Eunomius, *Apologia* 17 (SC 305, 266,2 = Vaggione 54,2–3); 21 (SC 305, 276,14 = Vaggione 60,11); 22 (SC 305, 278,1 = Vaggione 62,1).

10 Ebd. 7 (SC 305, 244,1–246,18 = Vaggione 40,1–15).

11 Ebd. 15 (SC 305, 262,1–264,11 = Vaggione 50,22–52,9).

12 Ebd. (SC 305, 264,12–21 = Vaggione 52,9–16).

13 CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,3–4 = SC 324, 10,28–29); 155 (GNO I, 73,23 = SC 324, 12,65–66); 156 (GNO I, 74,8–9 = SC 324, 14,9); 189 (GNO I, 82,7–8 = SC 324, 34,187–188); 316 (GNO I, 120,22 = SC 324, 122,189) u. ö.

14 Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (SC 305, 284,1–286,36 = Vaggione 66,1–68,29).

während seine eigenen ἐνέργειαι lediglich in der Belehrung (διδασκαλική) und der Heiligung (ἁγιαστική) bestünden¹⁵. Demgemäß ersetze, resümiert Gregor, Eunomios bei seiner Bibelexegese den traditionellen Namen „Vater“ mit dem neuen Begriff „oberstes und absolut ursprüngliches Wesen“, „Sohn“ mit „ein Wesen, das zwar aufgrund des ersten existiert, das aber nach jenem vor allen anderen den ersten Platz einnimmt“ und „Heiliger Geist“ mit „das beiden untergeordnete Wesen“, so als wolle er nachträglich das Evangelium korrigieren¹⁶.

Gregor begegnet dieser Doktrin des Eunomios mit drei Argumenten aus den Bereichen, die bis heute als die drei Glaubensquellen gelten: Schrift, Tradition und Vernunft. Dabei geht er freilich von einer Prämisse aus, die er hier nicht näher begründet und die Eunomios so auch mit Sicherheit nicht akzeptieren konnte. Er erkennt nämlich dem Sohn ebenso wie dem Vater das Attribut „wahr“ (ἀληθινός) zu und dem Heiligen Geist die Funktion des Wahrheitsvermittlers¹⁷. Die Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments als Offenbarung des Vaters und des Sohnes durch den Heiligen Geist stelle daher die göttliche Wahrheit selbst dar und bedürfe keinerlei nachträglichen Korrektur. Denn es sei unvorstellbar, daß der im Evangelium vom Herrn selbst überlieferte Glaube nicht vollkommen oder in seiner Wortwahl nicht vollkommen angemessen wäre¹⁸. Hinzu komme, daß von Anfang an die Glaubenszeugen und Missionare der Kirche durch die Jahrhunderte keine andere als die biblische Botschaft von Vater, Sohn und Heiligem Geist verkündet hätten und diese von allgemeinen Konzilien – Gregor bezieht sich hier speziell auf das Konzil von Nikaia 325¹⁹ – offiziell und schriftlich nachweisbar bestätigt worden seien. Die Lehre des Eunomios stelle also eine Neuerung (καινότης, καινή ὀνοματοποιία) gegen Schrift und Tradition dar, die als solche falsch und unzulässig sei. Es sei denn, räumt Gregor polemisch-ironisch ein, Eunomios und seine Anhänger handelten aus Unwissenheit, was Gregor aber nicht glauben kann. Der wahre Grund liege vielmehr in dem Versuch, die für alle evidente und vernunftgemäße Bedeutung der Begriffe „Vater“ und „Sohn“ zu verdunkeln und damit die ihnen eigene naturgemäße Beziehung (τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῶν καὶ φυσικὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλα σχέσιν) und ihre gemeinsame Natur (τὸ τῆς φύσεως συγγενές)²⁰.

15 Ebd. (SC 305, 286,31–33 = Vaggione 68,25–26).

16 CE I 156 (GNO I, 73,26–74,10 = SC 524, 14,1–11).

17 Ebd. 155 (GNO I, 73,17–19 = SC 524, 12,61–62).

18 Ebd. 156 (GNO I, 74,1–5 = SC 524, 14,2–5); 157 (GNO I, 74,11–14 = SC 524, 14,12–15).

19 Vgl. das *Symbolum Nicaenum*: Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἓνα θεόν πατέρα παντοκράτορα ... καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ... καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα.

20 CE I 158–160 (GNO I, 74,16–75,12 = SC 524, 14,17–16,39).

Diese generellen Äußerungen Gregors zur biblischen Hermeneutik lassen allerdings viele Fragen offen. Er deutet lediglich skizzenhaft die Grundzüge seiner Position an, die jedoch ohne weitere argumentative Präzisierung bleibt. Zwar ist der Abschnitt an verbaler Polemik nicht arm (73,16: τεχνολογία, βλασφημία; 74,1: κακουργεῖν; 22: καινότης; 23: ἀμαθείς; 24: ἀκατήχητοι; 25: ἀνήκοοι; 75,2: καινή ὀνοματοποιία; 11: λύμη τῆς ἀληθείας), an den dogmatisch umstrittenen Punkten aber beruft sich Gregor auf eine angeblich allgemeine Evidenz (75,2: πρόδηλον; 3: πάντες ἄνθρωποι; 4: εὐθύς; 7: αὐτομάτως διερμηνεύεται). Diese ist freilich – wie der Streit selbst zeigt – augenscheinlich nicht gegeben. Vor allem vermißt man die konkrete Diskussion der solcherart umstrittenen biblischen Texte. Eine derart defizitäre und scheinbar leicht hingeworfene Antwort auf ein so grundlegendes Problem ist eigentlich nur zu verstehen, wenn es sich hierbei lediglich um eine einleitende Skizzierung der Grundsätze handelt, die eingehende Diskussion später erfolgt.

In der Tat verschiebt Gregor die biblische Argumentation gegen Ende der Abhandlung, in Kapitel 123 (CE I 295–316)²¹. Der Grund dafür dürfte wohl darin zu suchen sein, daß er in seiner Antwort der Argumentationsweise des Eunomios folgen will. Denn auch dieser geht – wie wir später in seiner Apologie sehen werden²² und dies daher auch für die *Apologia apologiae* konjizieren dürfen – nicht primär von der Bibel aus, sondern von einem philosophischen System, das er auf die Bibel anwendet. Erst aufgrund dieser Interpretation argumentiert er auch biblisch. Deshalb dürfte auch Gregor die philosophisch-logische Argumentation vorwegnehmen, um damit zunächst die hermeneutische Basis für seine späteren Bibelinterpretation zu legen.

An einem Punkt argumentiert Gregor jedoch schon zuvor biblisch, in Kap. 16 (CE I 191–204)²³, bei der semasiologischen Untersuchung des Wortfeldes „ὑποτάσσειν/ὑποταγή“: „Untersuchung der Bedeutung des Wortes ‚Unterordnung‘, weswegen er (sc. Eunomios) sagt, daß die Natur des Geistes dem Wesen des Vaters und des Sohnes untergeordnet sei; worin begründet wurde, daß der Heilige Geist Vater und Sohn gleichzuordnen, nicht unterzuordnen ist.“²⁴ Gregor stellt in der Bibel drei verschiedene Kontexte der Worte ὑποτάσσειν und ὑποταγή fest:

1. Gott habe dem Menschen, da er ihn nach seinem eigenen Bilde geschaffen habe (Gen 1,26–27), die ganze unvernünftige Schöpfung untergeord-

21 GNO I, 113,20–121,3 = SC 524, 106,7–122,194.

22 Vgl. unten Abschnitt 2.

23 GNO I, 82,19–86,16 = SC 524,36,9–44,106.

24 CE I Kephalaion ις' (GNO I, 4,25–28 = SC 524, 36).

- net, wie in *Psalm* 8,7 (vgl. *Hebr* 2,8) zum Ausdruck komme: „alles unterwarf er seinen Füßen“.
2. Wenn das Volk Israel im Kriege siege, sei es Gott, der ihm die Gegner unterwerfe, wie es in *Psalm* 46,4 heiße: „er unterwarf uns Völker, und Nationen unter unsere Füße“ sowie in *Psalm* 17,48 bzw. 143,2: „der mir Völker unterwirft“.
 3. Ὑποταγή sei in der Bibel oft ein Ausdruck der Unterordnung unter eine überlegene Macht, wie z. B. in 1 *Kor* 15,28, wo Paulus davon spreche, daß am Ende der Zeiten zunächst alles dem Sohn unterworfen werde, er sich dann aber auch selbst dem Vater unterwerfen werde.

Dieses letzte Beispiel stürzt Gregor allerdings in große argumentative Schwierigkeiten, da es eindeutig von der Unterordnung des Sohnes unter den Vater spricht und, wie Gregor einräumt, einer weiteren und aufwendigeren Auslegung bedürfte. Diese könne er hier nicht leisten, verspricht sie aber für später. Daß Gregor dieses Versprechen tatsächlich mit seiner Schrift *In illud: Tunc et ipse Filius*²⁵ erfüllt, ändert nichts an dem Anschein, als ob er dieses Problem hier nicht lösen könne. Daß er dennoch diese und keine andere Bibelstelle als Beleg anführt, dürfte wohl nur daraus zu erklären sein, daß die Auslegung von 1 *Kor* 15,28 – wie wir später noch sehen werden²⁶ –, eine der zentralen biblischen Streitfragen in der Kontroverse war, die Gregor in keinem Falle mit Schweigen übergehen konnte, selbst wenn er sie nicht näher behandeln konnte. Hier stellt Gregor jedenfalls nur noch einige Überlegungen dazu an, wie man sich diese Unterordnung des Sohnes und des Geistes unter den Vater vorzustellen habe, die, wie er ebenfalls zugeben muß, auch noch weitere Bibelstellen bezeugten: Wie die der Tiere unter den Menschen, oder wie ein Gefangener unter den Sieger? Und wie verhalten sich dann Sohn und Geist zueinander, die beide dem Vater untergeordnet sind? Sind sie dann zueinander gleichgeordnet? Diese Fragen bleiben jedoch hier alle ohne Antwort.

Gregor geht vielmehr im folgenden auf ein logisches Argument des Eunomios ein, das er mit Hilfe von Beispielen aus der Bibel widerlegen kann. Eunomios behauptete offenbar, daß die Reihenfolge der Erwähnung eine Über- bzw. Unterordnung hinsichtlich Person, Würde und Natur bedeute²⁷. Dagegen kann Gregor eine Reihe von Schriftstellen zitieren, die dieses Argument *ad absurdum* führen. So werde z. B. in *Joh* 10,30 („Ich und der Vater“) sowie 2 *Kor* 13,13 („die

²⁵ Ed. J.K. Downing: GNO III/2, 3–28.

²⁶ S. u. S. 333.

²⁷ CE I 200 (GNO I, 85,2–8 = SC 524, 69–75).

Gnade unseres Herrn Jesus Christus und die Liebe Gottes“) der Sohn vor dem Vater genannt. In 1 *Kor* 12,4 („es gibt Unterschiede in den Gnadengaben, aber nur einen Geist; es gibt Unterschiede in den Diensten, aber nur einen Herrn; und es gibt Unterschiede der Wirkweisen, aber nur einen Gott“) stehe sogar der Geist an erster Stelle, dann werde der Sohn und erst an dritter Stelle der Vater genannt. Wäre die These des Eunomios also zutreffend, müßte man den Vater sowohl dem Sohn als auch dem Geist unterordnen. Daß sie insbesondere hinsichtlich des Unterschiedes der Naturen unhaltbar sei, zeige 1 *Thess* 1,1, wo nacheinander Paulus, Silvanos und Timotheos genannt werden. Niemand käme aber deswegen auf die Idee, an ihrer gemeinsamen menschlichen Natur zu zweifeln. Aufgrund all dieser Belege resümiert Gregor, daß Eunomios also offenbar nicht die wahre Bedeutung der biblischen Begriffe ὑποταγή und ὑποτάσσειν begriffen habe.

Die eigentliche biblische Argumentation Gregors gegen die These des Eunomios, daß Sohn und Geist in Abstufungen dem Vater untergeordnet seien, enthält schließlich Kap. 23 (*CE* I 295–316)²⁸, das Gregor überschreibt: „daß die Glaubenslehre nicht unbezeugt ist, sondern durch die Zeugnisse der Schrift gesichert“²⁹. Das Ziel des Kapitels besteht darin nachzuweisen, daß – wie die Schrift selbst z. B. in *Joh* 8,42; 16,27 und 17,8 bezeuge – der Sohn nicht geschaffen (ἐκτίσθη), sondern vom Vater ausgegangen (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξῆλθε) und mit dem Vater von gleicher Natur sei. Dabei solle man die Belege immer der Hl. Schrift entnehmen, da es kein wahreres Zeugnis als das Wort des Herrn selbst geben könne³⁰.

Bevor Gregor jedoch zur positiven Begründung dieser These schreiten kann, muß er zunächst ein Argument entkräften, das von arianischer Seite oft vorgebracht wurde³¹ und *Prov* 8,22 auf den Sohn Gottes deutete: „der Herr hat mich erschaffen (LXX: κύριος ἔκτισέ με) als den Anfang seiner Wege zu seinen Werken“³². Gegen diese Deutung sprechen für Gregor drei Gründe:

28 GNO I, 113,20–121,3 = SC 524, 106,7–122,194.

29 GNO I, 5,16–17 = SC 524, 104.

30 *CE* I 296–298 (GNO I, 114,1–17 = SC 524, 106,16–108,31).

31 Vgl. A. Martínez Sierra, „La prueba escriturística de los arrianos según S. Hilario de Poitiers“, *MCom* 42 (1969) 43–151; M. Simonetti, „Sull'interpretazione patristica di Proverbi 8,22“, in: M. Simonetti, *Studi sull'Arianesimo*, Roma 1965, 9–87; A. Θεοχάρη, „Ἡ θέσις τοῦ Παροιμιῶν 8,22 εἰς τὰς χριστολογικὰς ἐρίδας τοῦ 8' αἰῶνος“, *Kl.* 2 (1970) 334–346; Th. Böhm, *Die Christologie des Arius. Dogmengeschichtliche Überlegungen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hellenisierungsfrage*, 220–226.

32 *CE* I 298–300 (GNO I, 114,17–115,19 = SC 524, 108,32–110,60). Vgl. A.B. Brzoska, *Major Christological Texts in Gregory of Nyssa* (Diss. PUG), Rome 1962; M.J. van Parys, „Exégèse et théolo-

1. Es sei nicht nachweisbar, daß sich *Prov* 8,22 wirklich auf den Sohn Gottes und seine Schöpfung durch den Vater beziehe.
2. Das hebräische Original *Qânânî* rechtfertige nicht unbedingt die griechische Übersetzung ἐκτίσε, sondern sei eher mit ἐκτήσατο (er erwarb sich) oder κατέστησεν (er setzte ein) treffend übersetzt – ein Argument, das als stichhaltig gelten darf, da *qnn* wörtlich übersetzt soviel wie „ein Nest bereiten“ heißt³³.
3. Im übrigen bleibe die Stelle selbst dann unklar, wenn man die verbesserte Übersetzung akzeptiere, denn es bleibe ungeklärt, was in *Prov* 8,27 der Thron Gottes über den Wolken, sein Fundament und sein Sitz bedeuten sollte, da solche materiellen und menschlichen Vorstellungen bei Gott irrelevant seien. Das heißt, es handelt sich hier um anthropomorphe Redeweisen, die keinen Rückschluß auf die Wirklichkeit Gottes zulassen.

Zur positiven Begründung der Wesensgleichheit von Vater und Sohn knüpft Gregor an ein zwischen Eunomios und ihm unstrittiges Faktum an, daß nämlich alles durch den Sohn geschaffen worden sei, und zieht dazu zwei Belege aus der Bibel heran: *Joh* 1,3 („alles ist durch ihn geworden, und ohne ihn wurde nichts, was geworden ist“) und *Kol* 1,16–17 („denn in ihm wurde alles geschaffen, in den Himmeln und auf der Erde, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare, ob Throne oder Herrschaften, ob Mächte oder Gewalten; alles ist durch ihn und auf ihn hin geschaffen; und er selbst ist vor allem und alles hat in ihm Bestand“)³⁴. Während derselbe Befund Eunomios nicht daran hindert, den Sohn dem Vater als sein erstes und oberstes Geschöpf unterzuordnen³⁵, argumentiert Gregor, daß es unlogisch sei, daß der, durch den alles geschaffen sei, von derselben Natur wie das Geschaffene, also ebenfalls Geschöpf sei. Denn

gie trinitaire. *Prov. VIII,22 chez les Pères Cappadociens*“, *Muséon* 83 (1970) 351–366 = *Iren.* 43 (1970) 362–379; M.J. van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres contre Eunome de Grégoire de Nysse: Textes scripturaires controverses et laboration théologique“, in: M. Harl (éd.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 septembre 1969)*, Leiden 1971, 169–196; A. Meredith, „Prov. 8,22 chez Origène, Athanase, Basile et Grégoire de Nysse“, in: Ch. Kannengiesser (éd.), *Politique et théologie chez Athanase d’Alexandrie*, Paris 1974, 349–357; M. Zupi, *Incanto e incantesimo del dire. Logica e/o mistica nella filosofia del linguaggio di Platone (Cratilo e Sofista) e Gregorio di Nissa (Contro Eunomio)*, Roma 2007, 605 f.

33 Vgl. W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, bearbeitet von F. Buhl, Berlin-Göttingen-Heidelberg 1962 = ¹⁷1915, s. v.

34 CE I 301–313 (GNO I, 115,20–119,27 = SC 524, 110,60–120,168).

35 Eunomios, *Apologia* 24 (SC 305, 282,1–284,35 = Vaggione 64–66).

wenn wirklich *alles* Geschaffene durch ihn geschaffen sei, müsse er selbst logischerweise ungeschaffen sein. Das Fehlen des Heiligen Geistes in der Aufzählung der Geschöpfe erweist für Gregor darüberhinaus, daß auch er nicht zu ihnen gehöre. Diesem Schluß widerspreche auch nicht, daß die Cherubim und Seraphim nicht eigens erwähnt seien, sie fielen, wie viele Bibelstellen zeigten (*Jes* 6,3-7; 37,16; *Psalm* 102,21) unter die Kategorien der δυνάμεις und θρόνοι.

Resümierend verweist Gregor nochmals auf die trinitarische Taufformel *Mt* 28,19 sowie der darin ausgedrückten Gleichordnung von Vater, Sohn und Geist und bekräftigt, daß die von ihm angeführten Bibelzitate bezeugten, daß Sohn und Geist nicht auf der Ebene der Schöpfung einzuordnen seien, sondern vielmehr darüber in der Sphäre göttlichen Seins.

Soweit die Darstellung der biblischen Argumentation Gregors von Nyssa in seinem ersten Buch *Contra Eunomium* und seiner Überlieferung der bibeltheologischen Lehren des Eunomios nach dessen *Apologia apologiae*. Um jedoch Gregors Bibelverständnis und biblische Trinitätstheologie in der Auseinandersetzung mit Eunomios und dem Arianismus generell besser verstehen und einordnen zu können, ist es im folgenden nötig:

1. das Bibelverständnis des Eunomios darzustellen, wie es nicht nur durch die Zitate Gregors von Nyssa, sondern in seinem original erhaltenen *Apologetikos* nachzuweisen ist, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Fragen:
 - ob es sich zwischen erster und zweiter Apologie verändert hat,
 - ob Gregor in irgendeiner Weise tendenziös berichtet,
 - welche Rolle die für Gregor wichtigen Bibelstellen bei Eunomios spielen
 - und umgekehrt die des Eunomios bei Gregor.
 Gleichzeitig ist mit zu berücksichtigen, in welcher auslegungsgeschichtlichen Tradition beide stehen und wie Gregor an anderen Stellen seines Werkes diese Bibelzitate verwendet und interpretiert.
2. wäre zu fragen:
 - wie sich bereits Basilius in seinem Werk *Contra Eunomium* mit der Bibeltheologie der Apologie des Eunomios auseinandergesetzt hat,
 - welche Bibelstellen ihm im Vergleich zu Eunomios wichtig sind
 - und inwieweit Gregors Vorgehen damit vergleichbar ist, es fortsetzt oder bewußt andere Wege geht.
3. wäre schließlich die Verwendung der übrigen für Gregor in seinem ersten Buch *Contra Eunomium* wichtigen Bibelstellen in seinem Gesamtwerk zu erforschen sowie die Auslegungsgeschichte der Zitate, insbesondere in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Arianismus, um zu klären:

- inwieweit Gregor traditionelle Erklärungen übernimmt oder sie neu interpretiert,
- inwieweit seine Kontroverse mit Eunomios auf sein übriges Werk Einfluß gewinnt
- bzw. wie sehr sein gesamtes theologisches Verständnis seine Theologie im arianischen Streit formt.

Diese drei Punkte nacheinander ausführlich und detailliert darzustellen, übersteigt den Rahmen eines Kongreßbeitrags. Sie sollen daher im folgenden gemeinsam behandelt und so wenigstens ansatzweise beantwortet werden: durch einen Vergleich der Bibeltheologie des Eunomios und Gregors, unter Berücksichtigung des *Contra Eunomium* des Basilius und der Auslegungstradition.

II Die bibeltheologischen Kapitel der Apologie des Eunomios im Vergleich zu Gregor von Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I

Die 28 Kapitel der Apologie des Eunomios³⁶ kommen weitgehend ohne Bibelzitate aus. In den ersten 20 Kapiteln geht Eunomios ausschließlich philosophisch-logisch vor, lediglich sieben Bibelzitate bzw. -anspielungen sind darin nachzuweisen³⁷. Erst in Kapitel 21 entschließt er sich, „den Beweis dieser Ausführungen aus den Schriften selbst zu erbringen, damit wir nicht im Sinne der uns vorgeworfenen und von vielen öffentlich erörterten Gotteslästerung durch eigene Erfindungen und Worte der Wahrheit Gewalt anzutun scheinen“³⁸. Danach werden auch in den folgenden Kapiteln die Bibelzitate häufiger. Damit bestätigt sich der oben für die Vorgehensweise Gregors vermutete Grund, daß er mit dem Aufschub der biblischen Argumentation gegen Ende der Abhandlung der Reihenfolge seiner Vorlage folgt, so wie sie auch für Eunomios' *Apologia apologiae* vermutet werden darf.

In Kapitel 21 führt Eunomios in rascher Folge sechs Bibelstellen an, die für ihn eindeutig belegen, daß Gott Vater allein der wahre Gott sei³⁹:

36 Eunomios, *Apologia* (B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Cesarée. Contre Eunome*, tome II [SC 305], Paris 1983, 177–299; R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 1–75).

37 Vgl. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Cesarée. Contre Eunome*, tome II (SC 305), 277 Anm. 4.

38 Eunomios, *Apologia* 21 (SC 305, 276,7–10 = Vaggione 60,6–8).

39 Ebd. (SC 305, 276,12–15 = Vaggione 60,10–12).

1. das Wort Jesu an Maria (*Joh* 20,17) „ich gehe zu meinem Gott und zu eurem Gott“;
2. *Joh* 17,3, wo von dem einen wahren Gott (μόνος ἀληθινὸς θεός) die Rede sei, der Jesus Christus gesandt habe;
3. die Schlußdoxologie des Römerbriefes (16,27), die sich an den allein weisen Gott richte (μόνῳ σοφῷ θεῷ);
4. die Weigerung Jesu (*Mt* 19,17), sich gut nennen zu lassen, da nur Gott der Gute sei (εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγαθός);
5. 1 *Tim* 6,15, wo Gott der allein mächtige (μόνος δυναστής) und
6. 1 *Tim* 6,16 der allein unsterbliche (ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν) genannt wird.

Diese Belege, räumt Eunomios ein, bewiesen zwar keineswegs, daß der Sohn Gottes nicht auch Gott, weise, unsterblich und gut sei, aber in einer vom Vorrang des Vaters unterschiedlichen Weise. Während der Vater ungezeugt, dies alles also ohne Anfang aus sich heraus sei, habe das Wesen und alles, was der Sohn sei, aufgrund seiner Zeugung seinen Ursprung im Vater⁴⁰.

Vergleicht man die Auswahl der Bibelstellen in den bibeltheologischen Kapiteln der Apologie des Eunomios und Gregors *Contra Eunomium*, kann man keinerlei Übereinstimmung feststellen. Der Grund dafür liegt aber wohl nicht darin, daß sich die umstrittenen Bibelstellen geändert hätten oder Gregor bewußt nicht auf Eunomios einging, sondern daran, daß Gregor nicht direkt auf den *Apologetikos*, sondern die *Apologia apologiae* antwortet. Ein weiterer Vergleich der beiden Werke zeigt nämlich, daß fünf der sechs Zitate aus Kapitel 21 der Apologie des Eunomios auch in Gregors *Contra Eunomium* behandelt werden, und umgekehrt vier zentrale Bibelstellen der Kapitel 16 und 23 bei Gregor auch bei Eunomios eine wichtige Rolle spielen.

Auf *Mt* 19,17 („Gott allein ist gut“) kommt Gregor ausführlich in *CE* 3 zu sprechen⁴¹. Gegen die Auffassung des Eunomios, daß dies allein auf Gott Vater zutrefte, führt Gregor zwei Syllogismen ins Feld. Wenn Gott gut und der Herr Gott sei, dann sei auch der Herr gut. Und: Vater und Sohn seien nach dem Zeugnis von *Joh* 10,30 eins. Wenn also der eine Gott gut sei, gelte dies für Vater und Sohn gleichermaßen. Gregor verbindet hier die alte Frage um *Mt* 19,17 mit seinen in *CE* I 198 neu entwickelten Argumenten⁴². Damit wird ein Stück der Verbindung zwischen den biblischen Grundsatzkapiteln des Eunomios und Gregors deutlich, die bisher völlig zu fehlen schien. Die grundlegenden Pro-

40 Ebd. (SC 305, 276,10–278,24 = Vaggione 60,8–62,20).

41 *CE* III 20–21 (GNO II, 271,9–26).

42 GNO I, 84,19 = SC 524, 42,60.

bleme haben sich zwar offenbar nicht geändert, in der Gegenargumentation treten jedoch neue Bibelstellen in den Vordergrund.

Joh 17,3 wird von Eunomios nicht nur in dem besprochenen Kap. 21, sondern noch zwei weitere Mal im *Apologetikos* zitiert. In Kap. 17 behandelt er die Namen Gottes und stellt fest, daß die Namen „Seiender“ (ὄν) (*Ex* 3,14) und „allein wahrer Gott“ (*Joh* 17,3) nur dem Vater zukämen⁴³. Daraus schließt er, wie auch in Kap. 22, daß der Sohn als Gezeugter also nicht von gleicher Natur sei, sondern zu den Geschöpfen gehöre⁴⁴.

Bei Gregor steht *Joh* 17,3 in *CE* 3 im Kontext des Bekenntnisses, daß der Sohn Licht vom Licht sei⁴⁵. Eunomios unterscheidet aber in seiner Interpretation, der Vater sei das wahre Licht (ἀληθινόν), der Sohn nur das unzugängliche Licht (ἀπόσιτον). Gregor argumentiert dagegen logisch, daß Eunomios auf der anderen Seite behaupte, die Gottheit des Vaters werde durch den Sohn vermehrt und erhöht. Wie könne dann der Sohn hinsichtlich des Lichtes eine Minderung darstellen?⁴⁶

Joh 20,17 spielt im dritten Buch Gregors *Contra Eunomium* eine bedeutende Rolle. Nicht weniger als viermal wird diese Stelle in kurzem Abstand zitiert⁴⁷, und sie ist das erste Problem, das Gregor gleich zu Beginn des Buches ausführlich behandelt. Die Eunomianer hielten dieses Zitat für „den stärksten Beweis“ (ἰσχυρωτάτην ἀπόδειξιν) der Unterordnung des Sohnes. Gregor weist jedoch nach, daß man hier zwischen Gottheit und Menschheit Christi unterscheiden müsse. Die Worte „Gehe zu meinen Brüdern und sage ihnen, daß ich zu meinem Vater und zu eurem Vater gehe, zu meinem Gott und zu eurem Gott“ zeigten klar, daß hier der Mensch Jesus spreche, denn als Eingeborener habe er keine Brüder. Außerdem sei das Gehen ein menschlich-materieller Vorgang ebenso wie das Essen und Trinken nach der Auferstehung. Es handle sich also klar um eine anthropomorphe Aussage, die nicht auf die Gottheit des Sohnes angewandt werden könne⁴⁸.

Darüber hinaus ist Gregor jedoch der soteriologische Aspekt von *Joh* 20,17 wichtig. Hier geschehe die erste Verkündigung der Erlösung, „da es keine Ungnade mehr gibt für die Knechte, die von Natur aus keine Götter sind“⁴⁹. Daß Christus von dem gemeinsamen Gott und Vater spreche, zeige, daß jetzt wieder

43 Eunomios, *Apologia* 17 (SC 305, 266,1–2 = Vaggione 54,14–16).

44 Ebd. (SC 305, 268,10–13 = Vaggione 54,10–12); 22 (SC 305, 278,1–4 = Vaggione 62,1–4).

45 Vgl. das *Symbolum Nicaenum*: φῶς ἐκ φωτός.

46 *CE* III/10 35 (GNO II, 302,24–303,4).

47 *CE* III/10 1 (GNO II, 289,9); 4 (GNO II, 290,10); 8 (GNO II, 292,8); 17 (GNO II, 296,2).

48 *CE* III/10 1–7 (GNO II, 289,3–291,24).

49 *CE* III/10 10 (GNO II, 293,7–11).

der Mensch mit Gott versöhnt sei durch die Menschwerdung Christi, der von Natur aus Gott und Sohn sei, während die Menschen nun durch die Gnade Gottesöhne seien aufgrund der Mittlerschaft Christi⁵⁰. Gregor trifft also eine doppelte Distinktion: zwischen Gottheit und Menschheit Christi, aufgrund deren allein *Joh* 20,17 zu interpretieren sei, sowie zwischen der Sohnschaft Christi von Natur aus und der Sohnschaft des Menschen aus Gnade. Dieselbe Interpretation nimmt Gregor nochmals in der *Refutatio confessionis Eunomi*⁵¹, in *De perfectione*⁵² und in der Osterpredigt *De tridui spatio*⁵³ auf.

Michel van Parys hat in seinem Beitrag zum Gregor von Nyssa Kolloquium in Chevetogne 1971 gezeigt, daß Gregor in seiner Exegese von *Joh* 20,17 mehrere Auslegungstraditionen von Origenes über Athanasius, Markell von Ankyra und andere bis hin zu Gregor von Nazianz zusammenführt und aus ihrer Kombination etwas Neues schafft⁵⁴. Dazu wäre lediglich zu ergänzen, daß bei Origenes nicht nur die ökonomische Exegese von *Joh* 20,17 beginnt, sondern in gewisser Weise auch die der Unterscheidung der Naturen in Christus. Bei der Entwicklung seiner Erlösungstheologie in seinem „Gespräch mit Herakleides“⁵⁵ geht Origenes davon aus, daß der Mensch aus drei Teilen bestehe: Geist, Seele und Leib. Um also den Menschen als ganzen zu erlösen, habe der Sohn Gottes alle drei Teile annehmen müssen, und alle drei mußten an der Erlösung mitwirken. Deshalb trennten sie sich im Tod Jesu; der Leib habe im Grab gelegen, die Seele habe sich im Totenreich aufgehalten und der Geist des Herrn in den Händen des Vaters. *Joh* 20,17 „berühre mich nicht“ liefert deshalb für Origenes den Beweis, daß sich der Geist Jesu *noch* nicht mit Leib und Seele vereint hatte, sondern erst in der Himmelfahrt sich wieder mit ihm vereinte. Denn Christus habe nur in seiner ganzen Unversehrtheit berührt werden wollen.

50 *CE* III/10 11–15 (GNO II, 293,13–295,7).

51 *Ref Eun* 82 (GNO II, 346,5–10).

52 GNO VIII/1 205,9–206,9.

53 GNO IX 304,14–306,1. Vgl. H.R. Drobner, *Gregor von Nyssa, Die drei Tage zwischen Tod und Auferstehung unseres Herrn Jesus Christus. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert*, Leiden 1982, 163–165; M. Zupi, *Incanto e incantesimo del dire*, 613f.

54 M.J. van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres contre Eunome de Gregoire de Nysse: Textes scripturaires controverses et laboration théologique“, 169–196.

55 Origenes, *Dialogus cum Heraclide* 6–8 (SC 67, 68,20–72,17); vgl. Origenes, *Das Gespräch mit Herakleides und dessen Bischofskollegen über Vater, Sohn und Seele. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Edgar Früchtel*, Stuttgart 1974, 31–33 mit Anm. 39–53; H.R. Drobner, *Gregor von Nyssa, Die drei Tage zwischen Tod und Auferstehung unseres Herrn Jesus Christus*, 118.

Von den drei übrigen Bibelziten im 21. Kapitel der Apologie des Eunomios kommt *Röm* 16,27 in Gregors *Contra Eunomium* nicht vor, *1 Tim* 6,15 und 6,16 werden zwar *en passant* auf den Sohn bezogen, gewinnen aber keine weitere Bedeutung⁵⁶.

Basilius geht erstaunlicherweise auf keine der für die biblische Argumentation des Eunomios wichtigen Stellen ein. Zwar bezieht er sich zweimal auf *1 Tim* 6,16⁵⁷, aber nicht auf den ersten Halbvers, sondern auf den zweiten, den Eunomios nicht meint.

III Die bibeltheologischen Kapitel in *Contra Eunomium* I im Vergleich zur Apologie des Eunomios und Basilius, *Contra Eunomium*

Prüft man umgekehrt, welche Bibelzitate der bibelhermeneutischen Kapitel in Gregors *Contra Eunomium* I bereits für die Apologie des Eunomios und für Basilius relevant sind, entdeckt man vier: *Prov* 8,22; *Joh* 1,3; *1 Kor* 15,28 und *Kol* 1,16–17.

Die Geschichte der Exegese von *Prov* 8,22 (LXX: κύριος ἔκτισέ με) ist von Manlio Simonetti geschrieben⁵⁸ und von Michel van Parys hinsichtlich der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Eunomios und den Kappadokiern ergänzt worden⁵⁹. Eunomios zitiert den Text dreimal in seinen Werken: zweimal in der Apologie und einmal in der *Confessio*⁶⁰; an allen drei Stellen zum Beweis dessen, daß der Sohn Gottes Geschöpf (ποίημα, κτίσμα, γέννημα) des Ungezeugten sei. Er folgt damit langer arianischer Auslegungstradition, ohne neue Aspekte hinzuzufügen⁶¹.

Gregor behandelt diesen Text neben Buch I ausführlich in Buch III von *Contra Eunomium*⁶². Er stellt zunächst fest, daß es sich beim Buch der Proverbia um ein dunkles Buch handle, das nicht einer literalen, sondern tropischen bzw.

56 CE I 335 (GNO I, 126,17 = SC 524, 134,136); CE II 591 (GNO I, 399,10).

57 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* I 7 (SC 299, 190,18); II 29 (SC 305, 122,4).

58 Vgl. M. Simonetti, „Sull'interpretazione patristica di Proverbi 8,22“, 9–87.

59 M.J. van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres contre Eunome de Gregoire de Nysse: Textes scripturaires controverses et laboration théologique“, 179–186.

60 Eunomius, *Apologia* 26 (SC 305, 288,19 = Vaggione 70,15–16); 28 (SC 305, 298,29–31 = Vaggione 74,23–24); *Expositio fidei* 3 (Vaggione 152,5).

61 Vgl. die Literatur Anm. 31.

62 CE III/1 21–65 (GNO II, 10,22–27,8); vgl. M.J. van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres contre Eunome de Gregoire de Nysse: Textes scripturaires controverses et laboration théologique“, 181–185.

anagogischen Auslegung bedürfe. Er deutet daher *Prov* 8,22 allegorisch auf die Geburt des Herrn in der gläubigen Seele. Diese Deutung wiederholt er in der *Refutatio*, wo er aber zusätzlich – wie in *Contra Eunomium* I – ausführlich die Übersetzungsschwierigkeiten aus dem Hebräischen bespricht⁶³.

Ein Vergleich mit dem *Contra Eunomium* seines Bruders Basilius zeigt, daß auch dieser *Prov* 8,22 nicht auf den Sohn Gottes deutet und Gregors Deutung dieser Exegese theologisch folgt:

1. *Prov* 8,22 mache eine in der ganzen Heiligen Schrift einmalige Aussage.
2. Das Buch der Proverbia sei dunkel und schwer zu interpretieren (vgl. Gregor, *CE* III).
3. Die korrekte griechische Übersetzung wäre ἐκτίσατο, nicht ἔκτισε (vgl. Gregor, *CE* I und *Refutatio*)⁶⁴.

Lediglich in der Durchführung der allegorischen Auslegung in *CE* III folgt Gregor, wie van Parys gezeigt hat, nicht Basilius, sondern Markell von Ankyra⁶⁵.

Joh 1,3 („alles ist durch ihn geworden“) wird von Eunomios dreimal in seiner Apologie zitiert. In Kap. 15 erklärt er damit, daß der Sohn, wenn er auch vom Vater gezeugt, das heißt geschaffen sei, doch an der Schöpferkraft des Vaters Anteil habe und daher allen anderen Geschöpfen übergeordnet sei⁶⁶. Das bekräftigt er in Kap. 24 und 26⁶⁷.

Im Werk Gregors spielt *Joh* 1,3 eine noch wichtigere Rolle. Allein in *Contra Eunomium* zitiert er die Stelle zweiundzwanzig Mal. Sein wichtigstes Argument gegen Eunomios bleibt dabei das schon die in *CE* I 301–305 angeführte Logik: wenn wirklich *alles* durch den Sohn geschaffen sei, müsse er selbst logischerweise ungeschaffen sein⁶⁸.

Basilius bezieht sich in seinem *Contra Eunomium* zweimal auf *Joh* 1,3 in zwei verschiedenen Kontexten. In Buch II Kap. 13 wendet er sich mit einem Gregor ähnlichen logischen Argument gegen die These des Eunomios, daß der Sohn geschaffen sei⁶⁹: Wenn alles durch den Sohn geschaffen sei, sei auch die Zeit

63 *Ref Eun* 110–113 (GNO II, 358,7–360,4).

64 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 20 (SC 305, 82,21–84,44).

65 Vgl. M.J. van Parys, „Exégèse et théologie dans les livres contre Eunome de Gregoire de Nysse: Textes scripturaires controverses et laboration théologique“, 185.

66 Eunomios, *Apologia* 15 (SC 305, 264,12–21 = Vaggione 52,9–16).

67 Ebd. 24 (SC 305, 282,16–18 = Vaggione 64,13–15); 26 (SC 305, 290,22–24 = Vaggione 70,17–19).

68 Z. B. *CE* I 528 (GNO I, 179,1–10 = SC 524, 254,195–203); I 575–576 (GNO I, 192,9–18 = SC 524, 284,190–200); III/1 13–14 (GNO II, 8,6–26).

69 Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium* II 13 (SC 305, 48,10–38).

erst durch ihn geschaffen worden. Wenn es aber bei der Zeugung des Sohnes keine Zeit gegeben habe, sei es unsinnig zu sagen, er sei einmal nicht gewesen, weil dies eine zeitliche Kategorie impliziere.

In der sechsten Widerlegung in Buch II Kap. 7 geht es im Zusammenhang mit *Joh* 1,3 um die Frage, ob auch der Geist durch den Sohn geschaffen sei⁷⁰. Auch hier argumentiert Basilius logisch. Wenn es nur einen alleinigen Heiligen Geist gebe (ἐν πνεύμα καὶ ἁγίῳ), dann gehöre er auch zur φύσις μοναδική, das heißt zur göttlichen Natur⁷¹. Man sieht daran, wie bei der Exegese von *Joh* 1,3 bereits Basilius seine Argumente aus logischen Schlußfolgerungen zieht und Gregor dies mit geringen Veränderungen übernimmt. Allerdings gewinnt dieses Zitat bei Gregor eine weit überragendere Bedeutung als bei seinem Bruder Basilius, die von daher auch für die *Apologia apologiae* des Eunomios zu vermuten ist.

Besonderes Interesse gewinnt die Auslegung von 1 *Kor* 15,28, da Gregor in *Contra Eunomium* I die Auslegung wegen ihres Umfanges auf einen späteren Zeitpunkt verschiebt und sich damit dem Vorwurf aussetzt, er könne sie nicht beantworten, auch wenn er später einen eigenen Traktat dazu schreiben wird⁷². Die Frage, warum Gregor dann überhaupt gerade dieses Bibelzitat erwähnt, wo er doch selbst einräumt, daß es noch andere derartige Aussagen in der Bibel gebe, war oben vermutet worden, daß gerade dieses Zitat von so prominenter Bedeutung gewesen sein muß, daß Gregor es keinesfalls mit Still-schweigen übergehen konnte.

Diese These wird durch die Auslegungsgeschichte der Perikope 1 *Kor* 15,24–28 eindrucksvoll bestätigt. Eckhard Schendel hat ihr eine Monographie gewidmet (bis zum Ende des 4. Jh.)⁷³, M. Eckart hat sogar eine Monographie allein zu ihrer Auslegung bei Origenes verfaßt⁷⁴. Bereits Tertullian interpretierte 1 *Kor* 15,24–28 in Frontstellung zu modalistischen Tendenzen seiner Zeit subordinatianistisch⁷⁵. Origenes begründete mit diesen Versen unmittelbar seine Lehre von der ἀποκατάστασις πάντων⁷⁶. Im 4. Jh. gab den entscheidenden Anstoß Mar-

70 Ebd. SC 305, 172,32–36.

71 Vgl. Sesboué: SC 305 (1983) 173 Anm. 3.

72 Vgl. o. S. 323.

73 E. Schendel, *Herrschaft und Unterwerfung Christi. 1. Korinther 15,24–28 in Exegese und Theologie der Väter bis zum Ausgang des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 1971.

74 M. Eckart, *Das Verständnis von 1. Kor. 15,23–28 bei Origenes* (Diss. PUG), Rom 1962 (daktyl.). Excerpta, Augsburg 1966.

75 Vgl. E. Schendel, *Herrschaft und Unterwerfung Christi. 1. Korinther 15,24–28 in Exegese und Theologie der Väter bis zum Ausgang des 4. Jahrhunderts*, 30–73.

76 Ebd. 80–110.

kell von Ankyra⁷⁷. Er akzeptierte zwar das nizänische ὁμοούσιος, vertrat aber gleichzeitig einen strikten Monotheismus. Deswegen deutete er 1 Kor 15,28 ökonomisch so: Der Logos kehre dahin zurück, wo er zu Anfang gewesen sei, in der einen Gottheit eins mit dem Vater. Denn zuallererst sei Gott allein gewesen. Erst als die Schöpfung entstehen sollte, sei der Logos als Schöpferkraft (δραστηρικὴ ἐνέργεια) hervorgetreten. Nach vollendetem Heilswerk vereine sich daher der Logos wieder mit dem einen Gott.

Die Streitfrage um die markellische Interpretation, die die Eigenständigkeit des Logos gefährdete, wurde auf dem Konzil von Konstantinopel 381 entschieden⁷⁸. Damit wird das eigentliche Motiv, warum Gregor in CE I die Behandlung von 1 Kor 15,28 aufschiebt, klar. Er scheint wirklich noch keine überzeugende Lösung vorzuweisen zu haben. Denn CE I datiert in das Jahr 380, der Traktat *In illud: Tunc et ipse Filius* frühestens in das Jahr 383, eher sogar 385⁷⁹. Das Hauptproblem um die Exegese von 1 Kor 15,28 im 4. Jh. bestand nämlich nicht seiner Benutzung durch die Arianer, sondern in der fragwürdigen Auslegung in der antiarianischen Deutung Markells von Ankyra.

Außerdem: abgesehen davon, daß das Problem zur Zeit der Abfassung von CE I tatsächlich noch ungelöst war, hätte seine ausführliche Behandlung Gregor auf ein Nebengleis geführt, auf dem er eine antiarianische Theologie hätte kritisieren müssen, woran ihm in CE kaum gelegen sein konnte. Schließlich bestätigt die Tatsache, daß Eunomios 1 Kor 15,28 lediglich einmal in seiner Apologie zum Beleg der Unterordnung des Sohnes zitiert⁸⁰ und Basilius in CE diese

77 Ebd. 111–143; J.T. Lienhard, „The exegesis of 1Cor 15,24–28 from Marcellus of Ancyra to Theodoret of Cyrus“, *VigChr* 37 (1983) 340–359.

78 E. Schendel, *Herrschaft und Unterwerfung Christi. 1. Korinther 15,24–28 in Exegese und Theologie der Väter bis zum Ausgang des 4. Jahrhunderts*, 187–188.

79 Vgl. F. Diekamp, „Literargeschichtliches zu der Eunomianischen Kontroverse“, *ByZ* 18 (1909) 10–13; O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur. Bd. 3: Das vierte Jahrhundert mit Ausschluß der Schriftsteller syrischer Zunge*, Darmstadt 1962 = Freiburg ²1923, 199; W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, II, Leiden 1960, IX–XI; J.K. Downing, *The Treatise of Gregory of Nyssa In illud: Tunc et ipse Filius. A critical Text with Prolegomena* (Diss. Harvard University), Cambridge/Mass. 1947, XX; J. Daniélou, „La chronologie des œuvres de Grégoire de Nysse“, *StPatr* 7 (1966) 163, 167; G. May, „Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa“, in: M. Harl (éd.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse*, 57; J.T. Lienhard, „The exegesis of 1Cor 15,24–28 from Marcellus of Ancyra to Theodoret of Cyrus“, 348–350; J.K. Downing, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, III/II, Leiden 1987, XLIV–I; G. Maspero, „Tunc et ipse“, in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 766 f.

80 Eunomios, *Apologia* 27 (SC 305, 292,14–19 = Vaggione 70,11–72,15).

Stelle ganz ignoriert, daß sie zwar im Blickfeld der arianischen Exegese lag, aber dort keine herausragende Rolle spielte.

Das letzte Bibelzitat, das das bibelhermeneutische Kapitel Gregors in CE I mit der Apologie des Eunomios verbindet, ist Kol 1,16–17. In Kap. 24 seiner Apologie behandelt Eunomios die Theologie des Sohnes als des Bildes des Vaters⁸¹. Der Sohn sei nicht Bild des Vaters aufgrund der Gleichheit (ὁμοιότης) des Wesens (οὐσία), sondern aufgrund der Gleichheit der Wirkungen (ἐνέργεια), was Eunomios durch Kol 1,16 bestätigt sieht: „Er ist das Bild des unsichtbaren Gottes, der Erstgeborene der ganzen Schöpfung, weil in ihm alles geschaffen wurde, im Himmel und auf der Erde, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare.“

Basilios geht in CE nicht eigens auf diese Interpretation ein, sondern bezieht sich lediglich in Buch II Kap. 8 auf den Sohnesnamen „Erstgeborener“ (πρωτότοκος)⁸². Aufschlußreich für das Vorgehen Gregors ist jedoch der Kontext. Basilios behandelt nämlich in CE II 8 dasselbe Problem wie Gregor in CE I 155–160, nämlich die Frage nach der Zulässigkeit der Substitution biblisch überlieferter Gottesnamen durch neue, nichtbiblische⁸³. Basilios führt dabei eine Fülle von Bibelstellen an, die den Namen „Sohn“ für den Logos belegen, nirgendwo aber werde er γέννημα genannt, weswegen diese Bezeichnung unzulässig und falsch sei. Diese Frage beschäftigt Basilios von Anfang des CE an, was nicht nur ihre Wichtigkeit zeigt, sondern daß Basilios dieses semasiologische Problem als das Grundprinzip der Theologie des Eunomios erkennt, das es zuvorderst zu bekämpfen gilt. In Kap. 2 weist er anhand einer Fülle von Bibelzitaten nach, daß der Sohn nirgendwo γέννημα oder ποίημα genannt werde⁸⁴, in Kap. 4 und 5 setzt er sich grundsätzlich mit dem linguistischen Prinzip des Eunomios auseinander⁸⁵. So wie bei den Menschen Namen nichts über ihre gemeinsame Natur aussagten, sondern vielmehr über ihre Eigenschaften und Beziehungen, bezögen sich auch die Namen „Vater“ und „Sohn“ nicht auf deren Wesen (οὐσία), sondern auf deren Eigenschaften (ιδιώματα).

Wenn also Gregor in seinem ersten bibelhermeneutischen Kapitel in CE I das Problem der Namen behandelt, trifft er das Grundproblem der strittigen Exegese und folgt der Vorgehensweise seines Bruders Basilios. Er trennt allerdings im Unterschied zu diesem die Exposition des Prinzips und die biblischen Belege, um zunächst – der Vorgehensweise des Eunomios folgend – die logischen Argumente zu erläutern.

81 Eunomios, *Apologia* 24 (SC 305, 282,1–284,33 = Vaggione 64–66).

82 Basilios, *Adversus Eunomium* II 8 (SC 305, 34,40).

83 Ebd. SC 305, 30,1–34,47.

84 Ebd. SC 305, 12,1–16,40.

85 Ebd. SC 305, 18,1–24,17.

Ergebnisse

Der Vergleich der bibeltheologischen Kapitel der Apologie des Eunomios, der Antwort des Basilius und der weiteren Antwort Gregors muß hier notwendigerweise rudimentär bleiben. Dennoch dürften die Grundzüge der biblischen Argumentation der eunomianischen Kontroverse deutlich geworden sein.

Eunomios argumentiert grundlegend und vorrangig nicht biblisch, sondern logisch-philosophisch. Erst gegen Ende seines Werkes zieht er die Bibel heran, aber nicht, um daraus seine Theologie abzuleiten, sondern lediglich, um seine bereits gefestigte Theorie durch die Bibel zu stützen und seinen Gegnern auch auf dem Gebiet zu begegnen, auf dem sie ihn mit Sicherheit angreifen würden. Daß auch die *Apologia apologiae* so aufgebaut war, ist nicht zweifelsfrei nachzuweisen, da sie sich nicht in ihrer ursprünglichen Gestalt erhalten hat. Die Argumentation Gregors macht dies aber sehr wahrscheinlich.

Um so mehr erstaunt, daß Basilius nicht direkt auf die biblische Argumentation des Eunomios einging, sondern vielmehr eine eigene, davon unabhängige Bibeltheologie entwickelte, die allerdings ihrerseits nicht geringen Einfluß auf das Nachfolgewerk seines Bruders ausübte.

Auf den ersten Blick divergiert auch die biblische Argumentation Gregors völlig von der des Eunomios. Ein weiterer Vergleich der gesamten Werke aber zeigt sehr wohl, daß Gregor die wesentlichen biblischen Argumente des Eunomios aufgreift und bespricht. Er folgt allerdings der Argumentationsstruktur des Eunomios. Obwohl man annehmen darf, daß für Gregor die Bibel nicht nur weiterer, autoritativer Beleg für ein philosophisches Gedankensystem war, sondern seine Quelle, beginnt er doch hier mit den hermeneutischen Voraussetzungen, die er erst danach auf die Bibel anwendet. Er fügt sich dabei in der Interpretation in die oft lange, reiche und kontroverse Auslegungsgeschichte ein, wobei als seine Hauptquellen Origenes, Eusebius von Caesarea, Athanasius und Markell von Ankyra anzusehen sind.

Mit der biblischen Argumentation in *CE* I ist in der Auseinandersetzung auch noch nicht das letzte Wort gesprochen. Gregor wird noch manches weiter entwickeln (z. B. in *Tunc et ipse Filius*), und er wird vor allem die Ergebnisse in die pastorale, katechetische Praxis seiner Homilien umsetzen. Dies macht deutlich, daß die biblische Polemik gegen Eunomios für Gregor keine ausschließlich akademisch-argumentative Auseinandersetzung bleibt, sondern seine Motivation von einem zutiefst pastoralen Anliegen beseelt ist.

Textanhang

Petros Kallinikos, Contra Damianum XXI (CCG 35,44,204–219)

Wir erinnern uns an den weisen Gregor von Nyssa, der uns im dreizehnten Kapitel seiner Widerlegung *Contra Eunomium* (das mit den Worten beginnt: Es scheint, daß der Wunsch, allen zu nützen ...) ⁸⁶ diese Frage erläutert und es als keine geringe Gefahr bezeichnet, nachlässig die Wahrheit im Stich zu lassen, wenn sie von übel gesinnten Menschen verleumdet wird.

Er sagt: „Wenn also irgendeine Gottlosigkeit, von der wir uns fernhalten sollten, aufgrund des Gesagten jedermann unmittelbar offensichtlich geworden ist, und über die Gottlosigkeit hinaus die Unbegründetheit deren Absicht, könnte man denken, es sei überflüssig, zu jedem Punkt detailliert Stellung zu beziehen. Aber weil viele ohne Prüfung dem Gesagten gefolgt sind, *bevor sie die Dornen des Wortes bemerkten* (um mit dem Psalmisten zu sprechen) *und vom Zorn verschlungen wurden* ⁸⁷ (das heißt, daß sie nicht so sehr wie von einer Flutwelle in diesen Abgrund der Gottlosigkeit weggespült worden wären, wenn sie nicht etwas an diesen Argumenten für unüberwindlich und unwiderstehlich gehalten hätten), ist es zwingend notwendig, daß wir die Wahrheit nicht durch die geringste Nachlässigkeit preisgeben, selbst wenn wir das Argument mit vielen Worten widerlegen müssen.“

Petros Kallinikos, Contra Damianum XLIX (CCG 54,418,107–422,149)

Außerdem werden uns die weisen Worte des anderen Gregor (ich meine den Nyssener) Respekt und Ehrfurcht gegenüber den göttlichen Lehren einflößen. Denn als er gegen den abscheulichen Eunomios kämpfte und ihn sich schamlos nach Dingen ausstrecken sah, die man nicht wagen darf, sagte er im dreißigsten Kapitel seiner Widerlegung des Eunomios (dessen Anfangsworte lauten: Jedermann helfen zu wollen, war anscheinend nicht ...) ⁸⁸ Folgendes, nachdem er zunächst die Worte des Gotteslästerers zitiert hatte ‚Die Art Ähnlichkeit, die man erforschen muß‘ ⁸⁹.

Er sagt: Von wem, sagt er, soll sie erforscht werden? Welches Gebot, welches Gesetz der Schrift erfordert diese Nachforschung? Verbietet die Weisheit nicht eindeutig, zu tiefe Gegenstände zu untersuchen und zu schwierige Dinge zu erforschen und weise in unwesentlichen Sachen zu sein? Paulus sagt und [420/21] bezeugt im Herrn jedermann, der auf unserer Seite steht, *daß wir nicht*

⁸⁶ Vgl. GNO I, 22,5: Οὐκ ἦν, ὡς ἔοικε, τὸ πάντας ἐθέλειν εὐργετεῖν ...

⁸⁷ *Psalm* 57,10.

⁸⁸ Vgl. Anm. 86.

⁸⁹ Nur hier überliefertes Fragment.

über Dinge nachdenken sollen, die das übersteigen, was wir zu denken vermögen⁹⁰, nicht weil er Weisheit verachtete, sondern weil er ablehnt, daß wir uns gar zu sehr überspannen, indem wir unbegreifliche Dinge erforschen wollen.

Jesaja stellt klarer als alle anderen die Unmöglichkeit einer solchen Untersuchung fest, indem er seine eigene Zeugung als unaussprechlich bezeichnet. In der Tat legen alle Worte der göttlich inspirierten Schriften, die uns bildhaft das *Geheimnis der Glaubens*⁹¹ lehren, als Gesetz fest, daß wir nicht nach unbegreiflichen Dingen fragen sollen. Was nämlich die göttliche Lehre sagt, bedeutet die Grenze unserer Pflichten.

Aufgrund welcher Notwendigkeit suchte er also ‚die Art Ähnlichkeit‘⁹², obwohl es keinen Heiligen gibt, der empfohlen hätte, sich um solche Angelegenheiten zu kümmern? Wäre es nämlich den Propheten oder den Patriarchen oder den Jüngern des Herrn in den Sinn gekommen, diesen Dingen auch nur die geringste Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken, wäre es auch für uns nicht sinnlos gewesen, denselben Dingen in einer ebensolchen Suche nach Ähnlichkeit eifrig nachzugehen. Selbst dann wäre es freilich überflüssig gewesen zu erforschen, was bereits erforscht worden war, und wir hätten gut daran getan, uns an das zu halten, was bereits erkannt war.

Aber wenn der Gegenstand ihres Interesses sogar jenseits ihres eigenen Verständnis zu liegen schien und daher die Forschung an sich vergeblich (wobei ihre Untauglichkeit für den Gegenstand ihrer Forschung auf dessen Unbegreiflichkeit hindeutet), ist Eifer in diesen Dingen daher in beiden Fällen überflüssig und nutzlos, gleichgültig ob nun der erstrebte Gegenstand von den Heiligen erforscht wurde oder nicht. Denn hätte sich bei dieser Forschung irgendetwas Nützliches ergeben, hätten die Heiligen, die uns ermuntern, *mit Hilfe des Geistes sogar die Tiefen Gottes zu erforschen*⁹³, diese wesentlichen Dinge nicht unbeachtet gelassen. Wem nach [422/23] ihnen wird also enthüllt werden, was für die prophetische Offenbarung und die Erkenntnis der Apostel zu hoch ist?

Ich kenne keine Notwendigkeit, die sie zwingen würde, nach solchen Dingen zu fragen. Denn nach meinem Dafürhalten gibt es keinen anderen Grund für eine solche Untersuchung als ihr Bestreben, die Streitsüchtigen durch die Abstrusität ihrer Lehre auf ihre Seite zu ziehen. Hätten sie sich nämlich in Übereinstimmung mit den Lehren der Evangelien und der Apostel an die traditionellen Lehren der Väter gehalten, hätten sie keine Gelegenheit gefunden, bekannter zu werden als andere Leute.

90 *Röm* 12,3.

91 Vgl. 1 *Tim* 3,16.

92 Vgl. Anm. 89.

93 Vgl. 1 *Kor* 2,10.

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Logic and the Application of Names to God*

G. Christopher Stead

My title seems to call for an essay in philosophy. It hardly relates to the section of Gregory's text that we were asked to examine; it would indeed allow me to by-pass Gregory completely and investigate the problem of names for God in the context of modern logical theory. But this I think would hardly appeal to a company of theologians. I prefer to begin by showing how the problem was conceived during the seven centuries extending from Plato to Gregory,—at the risk of some overlap with Professor Kobusch, whose contribution was not yet announced when I began to consider this paper.

I

The first and most influential discussion of names is found in one of Plato's earlier dialogues, the *Cratylus*. The question here proposed is whether the correct use, the ὀρθότης of names is merely a matter of convention, or whether it has some basis in nature. By "convention" and "nature" I refer to the contrast between νόμος and φύσις which was already familiar, being used for example by the Sophists when discussing the basis of morality; νόμος then stands for accepted custom rather than enacted law. Broadly speaking we may say that Plato takes up a cross-bench position, inclining slightly towards the view that names are significant by nature. Socrates first interrogates Hermogenes, the champion of convention. At the outset his position is not clearly defined; he maintains that the right use of names involves convention and agreement, but in the same breath adopts a purely subjectivist approach; I may call my slave

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see G.C. Stead, "Logic and Application of Names to God," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 303–320. For more publications by the same Author, see G.C. Stead, "Ontology and Terminology in Gregory of Nyssa," in: H. Dörrie—M. Altenburger—U. Schramm, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1976, 107–127; Id., "Divine Simplicity as a Problem for Orthodoxy," in: R. Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, Cambridge 1989, 71–84; Id., "Why Not Three Gods? The Logic of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Doctrine," in: H.R. Drobner—C. Klock, *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der Christlichen Spätantike*, Leiden 1990, 149–163.

whatever I like without consulting anyone. In the ensuing discussion Socrates shows that the notion of a purely private language is incoherent; language is a social activity. But this still leaves the obvious point that different societies have different languages. Is there any criterion by which we can decide that one is better than another?

At this point the argument is confused by a fallacy. Socrates argues that since statements clearly can be true or false, the same principle should apply to parts of statements, and therefore to names; thus there can be true and false names.¹ We can show that this argument is unsound simply by extending it; names are composed of vowels and consonants; thus if Socrates is right, it must follow that individual letters can be true or false.² Nevertheless the notion of a true name has interesting possibilities; it is suggested that some names actually “reveal the essence” of the things they denote.³ As a modern example, we might take the word “wash-basin”; but later in the dialogue it is pointed out that such a name is instructive only if we know the meaning of its elements, “wash” and “basin”; it seems impossible to continue the process by finding significance in these elements themselves.

The discussion now turns to the process of devising or choosing names; it is suggested that they were introduced by some individual, the νομοθέτης,—or possibly by some group of talented men⁴—with an eye to their purpose and the objective reality to which they are directed. The idea that the invention of names demands an inventor is natural enough, though naive, and I cannot be sure how seriously Plato intends it; in *Genesis* 2:20 we find the same role assigned, no doubt seriously, to Adam. But the argument is repeatedly interrupted by parodies of absurd attempts to find significance in names by far-fetched etymologies, which in the last resort must be unhelpful even if they were sound, as we have just explained. Can we then discover some class of primary names which are significant in their own right? Socrates suggests that we can imitate the shapes and movements of things by gestures, and that human speech is a form of vocal gesture.⁵

Cratylus now enters the discussion; he contends that a true name indicates the nature of a thing, but tries to argue that any other name must be a mere unmeaning noise. Socrates replies by recalling the picture-theory of naming; a portrait can be recognizable even if it is not 100% perfect. We are then taken

1 Plato, *Cratylus* 385c.

2 Plato himself later corrected the fallacy; see *Theaetetus* 203.

3 Plato, *Cratylus* 393d; cf. 422d, 423e.

4 Plato, *Cratylus* 401b.

5 Plato, *Cratylus* 426–427.

back to the theory of names as imitative gestures; they can be appropriate to their subjects without matching them completely; thus the Greek word σκληρός, "rough", contains the appropriate rough letter ρ, though the smooth λ figures in it as well. Socrates then introduces a dilemma, which leads to a point of great importance to later readers of the dialogue. Assuming a first inventor of language, he must have chosen his names in the light of a prior knowledge of the realities to which they apply; but how could he know them, if he had as yet no means of naming them? Cratylus replies by suggesting that some super-human power introduced the original names. This point is very lightly sketched in;⁶ indeed Socrates at once raises an objection; and the dialogue ends by making a point which Plato clearly considered more important, namely that we do have a knowledge of things which is not derived from names, for example true beauty and goodness; we are thus left ready to attend to the theory of Forms.

Having made this brief survey I will add one or two critical comments. First, some of the difficulties are misconceived, and arise from the introduction of a "name-giver", with its corollary that the process of devising a set of names must be either wholly or largely completed within a single life-time. Given a longer time-span it becomes far easier to imagine the business of discriminating realities and naming them as two activities which go hand in hand and support one another. Secondly, the theory of language as imitative gesture is crude and inadequate, though we shall meet it again. And the notion that words are like pictures has the obvious drawback of suggesting that we use language only for making statements; we need a theory which can deal with questions, commands, and other sorts of discourse. Certainly the road sign which carries a picture of school-children conveys the injunction "Beware of school-children"; but it is not clear that much further development is possible; language has developed into a flexible instrument whose resources far exceed those of pictures. Thirdly, even convenience or the reverse attaches to the whole structure of a language rather than to single words. There is certainly some inconvenience if it is really true that in Tonga the word for "No" is "Hoolima kittiluca chee-chee-chee"; but once again, this is an exceptional case.

II

We pass then to Aristotle, who approaches the theory of language, inter alia, in two important early works, the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione*. He sets

6 Plato, *Cratylus* 438e; so previously, 397c.

out a distinction which is not always clear in Plato; the *Categories* is intended to deal with realities or notions or words taken separately, whereas the *De Interpretatione* is concerned with concepts or words connected to form a statement; thus a name is a spoken sound significant by convention;⁷ but only a combination of names and verbs signifies something true or false.⁸ There are a number of primitive features in Aristotle's treatment of language which were to cause difficulties to later commentators who took these words as authoritative. First, he is handicapped by an extremely limited understanding of grammar. Thus ὄνομα has to do duty both for what we call a noun and for a name; there is as yet no sign of a distinction between proper names and common nouns. Again, ὄνομα contrasts with ῥήμα; but this contrast marks the distinction between what we call subject and predicate, whether the latter consists of a verb or of a descriptive term such as "white" or introduces another noun, as in "Homer is a poet". Moreover Aristotle sometimes ignores this contrast and suggests that a statement simply involves the connecting, or indeed the unification, of two elements, as if these were symmetrically related; in other words, he often ignores the distinction which we now mark by saying that the subject-term *refers* to something, the predicate describes it. Again he says that spoken words are symbols of affections in the soul, and that written marks are symbols of spoken words. But this cuts across our well-founded conviction that the name Socrates stands for the man himself; for the name was given to him, and so not given to some person's idea or conception of him. Ideas and conceptions are no doubt involved in the process of giving names; but is not to them that the names are attached. In Christian societies, we baptise our children, not our thoughts.

All these points of course require much further discussion; but we must pass on, remembering chiefly that Aristotle is a decided advocate of the view that names acquire their significance by convention.

III

The Stoics are said to have taken over the theory of names as imitative sounds, which we encountered in the *Cratylus*.⁹ They are generally described as holding that names come into use by nature, φύσει; but perhaps their intention was to explain only the origin of language, since Chrysippus points out that

⁷ Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* II 16a19.

⁸ Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* I 16a15.

⁹ SVF II 146; Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 24 (SC 132, 134–140); cf. SVF II 895.

in our common usage there is not always the natural correspondence that we might expect; for similar words denote dissimilar things and vice-versa.¹⁰ But there are other more important and valuable aspects of Stoic philology. For one thing, they introduced a better classification of the parts of speech. Diogenes of Babylon mentions a five-fold division comprising ὄνομα, προσηγορία, ῥήμα, σύνδεσμος and ἄρθρον. Here then we meet for the first time an explicit distinction between ὄνομα, the proper name, and προσηγορία, the common noun; this is said to have been introduced by Chrysippus, whereas the older Stoics distinguished only ὄνομα, ῥήμα, σύνδεσμος, ἄρθρον. These four words in fact occur with others, in a list set down in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which προσηγορία does not appear. Ῥήμα now begins to take on the more restricted sense of the "verb"; σύνδεσμος includes all indeclinable connecting words, i.e. particles, prepositions and conjunctions in our notation; ἄρθρον is what we call the article; there is no mention of pronouns, adjectives or adverbs.

An even more important innovation introduced by the Stoic is one whose full significance has only been appreciated fairly recently, namely their theory of λεκτά, for which we may use the word "propositions". Ancient sources explain their distinction between the significant sound and the fact, πράγμα, which it signifies; but this fact, or proposition is not identical with the objective reality, τὸ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενον, which in this connection is called τὸ τυγχάνον, that which "exists" or "occurs".¹¹ This can be clearly seen in a case like that of Socrates walking, since here we have three entities of strikingly different form: the sound-waves in the air, the predicative statement, and the human animal in motion. The distinction appears again in the tenet that the sounds and objects referred to are both material, and therefore real, whereas the λεκτά, being immaterial, are not fully real.¹² It may also help to explain the puzzling distinction drawn by Seneca between *sapientia* and *sapiens esse*; *sapientia* being a collective noun referring to well-stocked minds in general, whereas *sapiens esse* means the fact that one or more people are wise.¹³ We note that in the context of *this* theory, words are considered simply as individual acts of speaking, though elsewhere the Stoics have much to say about words in a purely formal context, as we have already made clear. Λεκτά then, seems to be distinguishable from the words that express them, even though the distinction is quite

10 SVF II 151.

11 SVF II 166; and for λεκτά = πράγματα, 3 Diog. 20 ad fin. The same threefold distinction is expressed rather differently by Origen, *Philocalia* 4; here the terms used are φωνή, σημαινόμενα, and πράγματα καθ' ὧν κείνται τὰ σημαινόμενα; cf. also SVF II 168.

12 SVF II 166; 170; 331.

13 Seneca, *Ep* 117 (R. Gummere, 337–359); cf. SVF II 132.

often ignored. Translating λεκτόν by the Latin word *dictum* certainly makes for confusion; but even *dictum* can be interpreted as “that which is signified”, not “that which is pronounced”.

As usually presented, this theory retains the defect which we have already observed; it applies most easily to statements, and there are problems in extending it to deal with other uses of language. But it has important advantages. In the first place, it avoids the misleading suggestion that words are symbols of thoughts, which we noticed above;¹⁴ “misleading”, that is, as a general doctrine; we shall not wish to deny that *some* words describe and refer to our thoughts. Secondly, it suggests, correctly, that the normal unit of discourse is the sentence, not the individual word. Aristotle had begun by considering words taken separately, and then explained how they can be combined to form a sentence; the Stoics keep their eyes on situations and the sentences that describe them. Detached parts of a sentence are called “incomplete *lekta*”, λεκτὰ ἔλλιπῆ; though here admittedly there is a danger of confusing the words with the meaning which they express.

The theory of λεκτὰ being immaterial is bound to raise problems about the effects they produce. The official Stoic view is that cause and effect are interactions of material things. But if we act on a command, we are responding, not to the sounds as such, but to the meaning which they convey, the immaterial λεκτόν. There is an alternative Stoic treatment of causation which might provide the answer; if wood is burnt by fire, it is sometimes argued that both the cause and thing affected are material, but the effect itself is not; the burning of the wood is a κατηγορήμα, a stateable fact, and as such immaterial.¹⁵ Perhaps, then, an immaterial fact of this kind could be produced by an immaterial λεκτόν. But I think there is a deep-rooted confusion at this point. A changing substance is still a substance; for that matter, burning wood does not immediately cease to be wood. And if we speak of a fire, we are naming this process; our words denote a substance undergoing change, rather than simply expressing the stateable fact that it occurs. One can pick up a fire in a shovel: I do not see how one can shovel up a fact.

Despite all such embarrassments, it is clear that the Stoics have escaped from the narrow horizon of trying to explain language simply by accounting for names; they are concerned with situations and events, and are at least trying to distinguish these from the sentences which describe them.¹⁶ A fortiori,

14 Cf. SVF II 167 with the misleading 168.

15 Cf. SVF II 341.

16 Cf. SVF II 171.

they see the same individual can be referred to in different ways,¹⁷ and thus either by giving his name *ὄνομα*, or by borrowing what is normally a descriptive term, a *προσηγορία*. If Alexander is king, it makes no difference whether we say “Alexander is brave” or “the king is brave”; but it does not follow from this that “king” simply means the same as “Alexander”; for “the king of Persia” is a meaningful phrase; “the Alexander of Persia” is not.

IV

I think, then, that it is probably the Stoics who clarified the meaning of a term which plays an important part in the controversy aroused by Eunomius, namely the noun *ἐπίνοια*. The facts about this word are not very easy to discover, partly because the only available monograph, the little treatise published by Antonio Orbe in 1955, pays no attention to pre-Christian authors. In popular usage *ἐπίνοια* seems to have had the fairly ill-defined meaning of a thought or notion; it can also refer to a project, and it is worth noting that its one occurrence in the New Testament, at *Acts* 8:22, refers specifically to the wicked project entertained by Simon Magus. In some contexts it refers to the exercise of imagination, though this may be controlled by the intellect, and thus enable us to arrive at notions for which sensory experience provides the material, though it is not properly speaking the cause of our thinking. The key passage here, given by H. von Arnim, *SVF* II 87, is Diogenes Laertius VII 52. The same material is used with polemical intention by Sextus Empiricus *Adversus mathematicos* VIII 56, and it seems that Eunomius independently drew on Diogenes, though his polemical aims are rather different from those of Sextus; see Gregory of Nyssa *CE* II 179.¹⁸ Diogenes tells us that our conceptions, *τὰ νοούμενα*, are based either on experience, *περίπτωσις*, or on mental operations, which he enumerates, and which mostly involve easily intelligible modifications of experience: likeness, analogy, transposition, composition, opposition; thus by analogy we imagine giants and dwarfs; again, death is conceived as the opposite of life (though why?, one might ask; we can have a direct encounter with death). But we are then told that some things are conceived *κατὰ μετέβασιν τινα*, such as *λεχτά* and *τόπος*; these we note belong to the four phenomena which the Stoics describe as incorporeal, and therefore as not fully real.¹⁹ But they are not

¹⁷ *SVF* II 151.

¹⁸ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* II 179 (*GNO* I, 276).

¹⁹ Cf. *SVF* II 331.

mere imaginary forms like centaurs or giants;²⁰ they depend upon a sophisticated process of generalization and abstraction. It appears from Sextus that the phrase τὰ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν νοούμενα stands for the products of any such process, whether naive or sophisticated, as opposed to what is known from experience, τὸ κατὰ περίπτωσιν ἐγνωσμένον; for Sextus is concerned to make the fairly simple point that both our conceptions and our fanciful imaginations depend on sense-experience. Eunomius however wants to suggest that things qualified as κατ' ἐπίνοιαν are purely fanciful; he mentions only giants, dwarfs, many-headed monsters and half-beasts. This accords with the popular meaning of ἐπίνοια, but not with its technical usage, as we can see once again from Sextus x 7;²¹ he tells us that if we imagine all (real) objects abolished, the space which contains them will still remain: καὶν κατ' ἐπίνοιαν δὲ ἅπαντα ἀνέλωμεν, ὁ τόπος οὐκ ἀναιρεθήσεται ἐν ᾧ ἦν τὰ πάντα, ἀλλ' ὑπομένει (ὑπομενεῖ?). This no doubt postulates an exercise of the imagination; but it is not idle or poetic fancy, but rather a disciplined thought-experiment.

The distinction between sense and reference which we have ascribed to the Stoics becomes fairly clear in a much discussed passage of Posidonius, *fr.* 92;²² here it is said that οὐσία and ὕλη are identical κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν and differ ἐπινοίᾳ μόνον. I think this must mean that the *reference* of the terms οὐσία and ὕλη is identical; they differ in sense, or in the description they convey. We learn from *fr.* 92 that οὐσία can mean existence as a whole, which neither increases nor diminishes, but merely suffers change; while *fr.* 5, if reliable, indicates that Posidonius thought of ὕλη as the passive ἄποιος οὐσία, distinguishable from the active principle within it. The argument, then, is that one and the same reality is called οὐσία in that it exists, and ὕλη in that it is liable to change.

V

We may now turn to Philo, who accepts the principle that one and the same thing can have various ἐπίνοιαι and indeed gives it a theological application. The word itself is by no means infrequent; Leisegang's index notes 26 instances, and there are others, less easy to trace, in the *Quaestiones*. In Philo's usage it very seldom refers to mere fantasy, like the invention of centaurs; there is

20 Cf. SVF II 332.

21 Cf. SVF II 501.

22 L. Edelstein, *Posidonius. Volume 1: The Fragments*, Cambridge 1989, 99; H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, Berolini 1879, 458.

just one possible example, at *De migratione* 192;²³ God's mind really does pervade the universe, unlike man's, which can only travel round it in imagination, ἐπινόια μόνον. By far the commonest meaning is a project, or the means chosen to attain it, and not infrequently a wicked project, like that of the tower-builders of Babel;²⁴ but sometimes an admirable human skill, like that of the ship-builder.²⁵ Sometimes ἐπινόια denotes theoretical knowledge; it can refer to organized research,²⁶ or again to the knowledge of medicine.²⁷ This leaves three contexts to be considered, of which by far the most important is *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* 23.²⁸ Here Philo explains that God, as indicated by ὁ αἵτιος, has two appellations (προσρήσεις), namely θεός and κύριος; but in the text under discussion, *Genesis* 15:2, the word δεσπότης is used; and κύριος and δεσπότης are said to be synonymous. Philo then continues: ἀλλ' εἰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἐν καὶ ταῦτόν ἐστιν, ἐπινόαις αἱ κλήσεις διαφέρουσι, the two titles differ in their descriptive force, κύριος signifying firmness or validity (κύρος) and δεσπότης implying a bond, δεσμός, which again suggests δέος, fear. The picture is complicated, and we should not assume that the two terms κύριος and δεσπότης have the same relationship as θεός and κύριος. This latter pair are of course related to the one and only God, but as Philo tells us elsewhere they name two distinct powers; whereas κύριος and δεσπότης are alternative titles for *one* of these powers, and it is this that is indicated by saying τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἐν καὶ ταῦτόν ἐστιν. However at *Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum* II 63 the word ἐπινόια seems to mark a contrast between the two primary powers themselves, here described as "the creative" and "the royal" powers; for the Greek fragment reads: πρεσβυτέρα δὲ ἡ ποιητικὴ τῆς βασιλικῆς κατ' ἐπινόιαν. (As a rough parallel, we might imagine an English aristocrat who has inherited or obtained two distinct titles, one of them more dignified or actually more ancient than the other, though of course there is no difference in the age of the man himself). Thirdly, at *De specialibus Legibus* II 29 we are told that ὁ τῆς φύσεως ὀρθὸς λόγος has the function both of a father and of a husband, πατὴρ ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἔχει δύναμιν, ἐπινόαις διαφόροις, in that he both implants the seeds of virtue in the soul and procreates good designs and actions, which he subsequently nourishes with refreshing doctrines, ποτί-μοις δόγμασιν. The language is largely Stoic, especially the phrase ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος:

23 Cf. Philo, *De migratione Abrahami* 192 (Wendland II, 306).

24 Cf. Philo, *De confusione linguarum* 158 (Wendland II, 259); Id., *De somniis* II 285 (Wendland III, 304).

25 Cf. Id., *De specialibus legibus* I 335 (Cohn V, 81).

26 Cf. Id., *De somniis* I 39 (Wendland III, 213).

27 Cf. Id., *De execrationibus* 145 (Cohn V, 370).

28 Cf. Id., *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* (Wendland III, 7).

the sequence ὁ τῆς φύσεως ὀρθὸς λόγος is repeated at *De opificio mundi* 143, which makes the conventional Stoic comparison of the cosmos with a well-governed city; and the Stoics of course described the Logos as *σπερματικός*, though I have not so far discovered parallels to Philo's vivid images of its intercourse with the individual soul. Plutarch also quotes from Chrysippus a reference to ὁ κοινὸς τῆς φύσεως λόγος, which is identified with εἰμαρμένη and πρόνοια and Zeus;²⁹ no doubt the theory of ἐπίνοιαι will have been employed in making these equations.

At all events, Philo clearly understands that one and the same reality can be referred to by alternative designations which describe its activity under different aspects or by different metaphors.

VI

Our account so far may have suggested a continuous process of improvement and clarification in terminology; but from about Philo's time onwards we have to recognize an influence which continually threatens to obscure the results so laboriously achieved; I refer to the influence of classicism, the view that all important knowledge and understanding had already been discovered by the ancients, and the further disposition to select among ancient authors on the score of literary merit. The *Cratylus* of Plato and the *Categories* and *De Interpretatione* of Aristotle now come to be regarded as standard authorities; Aristotle's *Topics* also gains more influence than it deserves. Thus the important progress made by the Stoics in understanding the way in which language is significant tends to be overshadowed by a return to the old problem, do names acquire their meaning by nature or by convention? What we commonly find is a compromise theory, that names are indeed to be traced to an original name-giver, but that he selected the names that had a natural appropriateness to their objects. But here the argument all too often stops short, without attempting to enquire what makes names naturally appropriate. Philo thus argues that Moses did better than the Greeks in attributing the origin of language, not simply to wise men, but to the first man created;³⁰ "for if many persons had assigned things their names, these would have been inconsequent and ill-matched ... whereas naming by one man was likely to harmonize with the reality, and this

²⁹ Cf. SVF II 937.

³⁰ Cf. Philo, *De opificio mundi* 148 (Cohn I, 51–52); *Legum allegoria* II 14f. (Cohn I, 93); *De mutatione nominum* 63f. (Wendland III, 168); contrast, however, *De vita Mosis* I 130 (Cohn IV, 150–151); *De decalogo* 23 (Cohn IV, 273).

would be a consistent symbol for all men of the fact or the thing signified", τοῦ τυγχάνοντος ἢ τοῦ σημαινομένου, the phrases which we have already seen in use among the Stoics.

VII

To this theory of the giving of names there is of course one major exception, the name of God himself, if it is right to call it a name. This, it is clear, can only be known because God himself has revealed it. But what exactly has he revealed? Philo's difficulty is obvious. On the one hand, he knows that God has a name which must not be spoken, "except by those whose tongue is purified by wisdom in the holy place", *De vita Mosís* II 114, and that this name is signified by four Hebrew characters; he most probably did not know how these should be pronounced.³¹ On the other hand, in Philo's Greek Bible, Moses asks God for his name, and is given the reply Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (*Ex* 3:14); though an alternative is immediately suggested: "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham ... this is my name for ever". We cannot say that ὁ ὢν functions for Philo as a proper name; indeed he says explicitly that God has no need of a name;³² but he clearly regards it as a uniquely appropriate and revealing title. Let us note that all other appellations which we find applied to God are in one place or another referred by Philo not to God himself, but to one of his δυνάμεις. This is certainly true of the titles θεός, κύριος, βασιλεύς, ποιήτης, δημιουργός, ἄρχων, εὐεργέτης, and I think of ἀρχή. But the phrase ὁ ὢν is never Identified with a δύναμις; it has δυνάμεις assigned to it. We must not enlarge on Philo's theory of God's δυνάμεις, which has often been described; in his view, God is perfectly simple, but has many δυνάμεις; the intellectual apparatus for this doctrine is drawn from the Greek debate as to whether we can consistently describe the soul, or the mind, as simple, and also as having parts; i.e., can we harmonize the *Phaedo* with the *Republic*? A commonly-accepted view was that the soul is simple, but has various functions, which can be described as δυνάμεις, or again as in later Christian theology, as ἐνέργειαι.

Philo can therefore be said to anticipate Eunomius in one respect, namely that he selects one title as uniquely appropriate and indicative of God's nature. In other respects he is of course poles apart. Although he comments on this

31 Cf. Philo *De vita Mosís* II 115 (Cohn IV, 227): τετραγράμματον δὲ τοῦνομά φησιν ὁ θεολόγος εἶναι.

32 Cf. Philo, *De Abrahamo* 51 (Cohn IV, 12).

title, he also explains that God is “unnameable and indescribable and incomprehensible”. It is presumably because ὁ ὢν is a completely general expression that he describes God himself—as distinct from his Logos—as “supremely general”, γενικώτατος, and so comparable with the word τί, which for the Stoics included things that were not even real.³³ Philo’s language, however, is controlled by the metaphysics of the Platonists, for whom “being” is a value term, and distinct varieties of being arise by some form of limitation or qualification, rather as we now realize that colours are derived from plain white light. We therefore have the paradox that the purely abstract and uninformative term is considered appropriate to denote the inexhaustible riches of the supreme reality, of which all beauty and perfection that we can observe is only a derivative of inferior rank.

There is of course one further question to be raised here. Philo refers to the supreme being both as ὁ ὢν and as τὸ ὄν—he will not unfortunately delight those friends of ours who think he should have used the designation ἡ οὐσία! Are we to say that the notion of pure Being is in some way qualified by the expression ὁ ὢν, where the masculine gender imports some suggestion of male, and therefore personal, being, which is appropriate when we read of God speaking, and therefore revealing himself to man? Or shall we say that it merely neutralizes the opposite suggestion of impersonal, and so possibly sub-personal, being, which is encouraged by τὸ ὄν, and perhaps also affects the use of phrases like τὸ θεῖον as opposed to ὁ θεός? I do not know how to answer this question. I slightly prefer the first alternative. In Greek usage, of course, it is by no means true that the masculine gender applies only to human males, and the neuter only to inanimate objects; nevertheless the use of the neuter to denote males is a little unusual; men’s names are usually masculine in form; the neuter being used not uncommonly for women’s names, and of course for diminutives.

Having dealt as best I can with Philo’s usage, I would like to continue by tracing the use of the word ἐπίνοια down to the Fourth Century. But time does not allow this; and I must offer some general comments on the logic of nomenclature. But there is one passage which is important enough to deserve mention even in the briefest sketch of the patristic evidence, namely Origen *In Iohannem* I 20,119, ὁ θεός μὲν οὖν πάντα ἐν ἐστὶ καὶ ἀπλοῦν· ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν διὰ τὰ πολλά, ἐπεὶ προέθετο αὐτὸν ὁ θεός ἱλαστήριον καὶ ἀπαρχὴν πάσης τῆς κτίσεως, πολλὰ γίνε-ται, κτλ.³⁴ In the event, of course, it proves that the Logos has several distinct roles, for which Origen uses the term ἐπίνοια, quite apart from the various good

33 Cf. Philo, *Legum allegoria* II 86 (Cohn I, 107).

34 Origen, *In Iohannem* I 20,119 (GCS 10 [IV], 24).

offices which he undertakes for the salvation of men; a suggested list is σοφία, λόγος, ζωή and perhaps ἀλήθεια. The strong declaration that God himself, ὁ θεός, is totally one and simple may perhaps have helped to convince Eunomius that only one designation for him is allowable. But this of course is not Origen's view; he argues that one and the same being is δημιουργός and θεός and πατήρ, both of Christ and of ourselves, and is at least prepared to consider the argument that the titles πατήρ and θεός indicate distinct ἐπίνοιαι.³⁵ We may note that in his use of ἐπίνοια Eusebius conforms fairly closely to Origen,³⁶ and Arius appears to do so too;³⁷ whereas Athanasius replies by treating ἐπίνοια as a word reserved for mere fancies or fabrications, and to this extent prepares the way for Eunomius.

VIII

I return at last, then, to my ostensible subject, "Logic and the application of names to God". What are we to understand by the word "names"? In the broadest sense ὄνομα can be equivalent to our word "noun", and thus include common nouns or descriptive terms, more accurately distinguished by the words προσ-ηγόριαι and προσρήσεις. From these we can distinguish proper nouns or proper names; but we note at the outset that these are not necessarily personal names; there are names of countries, like Sicily, and of mountains, like Etna. Indeed in some ways these are less problematic; it may well be that the island of Sicily is the only country to which this name is attached; whereas in human societies a personal name can only pick out its owner within his immediate circle; there are simply not enough names in existence to give each individual in the world a name of his own. But in discussing personal names we commonly keep up the fiction that someone's name really is a proper name in the sense of being peculiar to him. And we have to recognize another fiction encouraged by the Greek phrase κύριον ὄνομα, namely that a person's name in some way not only denotes that one individual, but correctly describes him. This is a state of affairs which we should find it very difficult to bring about, even if we tried to do so, where names are normally assigned to individuals before their character develops. We could I think imagine providing somebody with a nickname which really was peculiar to him and was also significant to the extent of alluding to some outstanding feature of his appearance or his character. Fictional characters, of

35 Cf. Origen, *In Iohannem* 1 19,5 init. (GCS 10 [IV], 23).

36 Cf. Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia* II 10,6; 14,22 (GCS 14 [IV], III; II8).

37 Athanasius, *De synodis* 15 (AthW II, 242–243).

course, do have names which are significant and possibly unique; Medusa, the cunning one, Prometheus, the forward-looking; and returning to real life, of course it *could* have been the case that Xenophon's friend Cheirisophus really was clever with his hands, or even received this name as a sobriquet when his skill was discovered. What is impossible in the case of human beings or islands or mountains is to provide a name from which all their characteristics can be deduced, as we might claim for geometrical figures like the triangle; but ancient theorists, under Plato's influence, are often haunted by the ghost of this possibility.

In primitive societies it seems that no embarrassment was felt in designating gods by personal names. The early Israelites named their own God Jahweh, and were quite prepared to acknowledge Chemosh as the god of the Ammonites and therefore no concern of theirs. It would need an Old Testament specialist to tell us precisely why the name Jahweh came to be regarded as too sacred to pronounce. A tentative answer might be that the worshippers of Jahweh were concerned that he should be properly honoured, i.e. concerned about his "name" in the sense of his reputation, and indeed attributed a similar concern to Jahweh himself; so that the phrase "his name" came to indicate his real character, and also to be used as a reverential expression for the divinity. But there may well be a different explanation for the avoidance of the actual name "Jahweh", as opposed to the descriptive expression "his name"; for we normally apply names to familiar things like persons and places. The Israelites may well have felt that to provide the God of all the universe with a name was to assimilate him to the cultic gods of the heathen. More generally, we might suppose that it is normally the function of a personal name to pick out an individual within a class of similar beings; in this case, to apply a personal name to God would be to suggest that he is not unique. This would go some way to explain the special appeal of a distinctively mysterious phrase like "I am" or "He Who Is".

IX

But we need to come back to Eunomius; for it is clear that the controversy which he prompted does not turn on personal names; the question at issue is rather, whether there is some one descriptive term for God which enjoys a privileged status. Eunomius made this claim for the word *ἀγέννητος*. His argument, I think, must be that God is perfectly simple as regards his essence, though he has various operations, powers, and energies. He can therefore have only one proper designation; if more than one term were applied to his essential

nature, this would inevitably imply that there were distinguishable aspects of his essence named by the different terms, so that it would be no longer simple. I find this argument unconvincing; and I think it can be answered even without appealing to Basil's theory of ἐπίνοιαι; for it seems to imply that the actual word ἀγέννητος is indispensable. Would Eunomius then insist that no Latin or Persian speaker can hold correct theological views? But if ἀγέννητος can be translated, why should one refuse to admit that it can be replaced in Greek by a synonym which is equally capable of representing God's perfectly simply essential nature? It may be answered, perhaps, that there is no perfectly adequate synonym; but then, clearly, there is no perfectly adequate translation either. Eunomius therefore has to choose; either he must insist that Greek is the only language in which theology can be acceptably stated, or he must admit that roughly synonymous expressions may be admitted, with all the risk of a variation of nuance which would compromise the divine simplicity. The word ἀρχή for instance, might be suggested as an appropriate synonym.

Eunomius could answer, of course, that ἀρχή will not do, since it has a wide range of applications; whereas, in his own time and milieu at least, it could be argued that ἀγέννητος—spelt with νν—was only used in connection with the divinity. And its compound, negative form does give it a certain advantage over other descriptive terms. If we take a word such as ποιητής, it could be argued that we only learn the use of this word by meeting it in ordinary contexts, and that therefore it must have associations which render it unfit for describing the unique source of all life and being. But this argument ignores the flexibility which our language displays, and the extent to which it is affected by its context. What is normally a descriptive term, "the x", can often be understood as "the x to which it is proper to refer in this context"; within a family, for instance, the word "Father" quite properly means "the father of this family", without any sense of a conflict with its use as a common noun. A more sophisticated variant of this is the case where "the x" denotes some individual κατ' ἐξοχήν, as Aquinas refers to Aristotle, calling him *philosophus*, "the philosopher". This logic governs our use of the word "God"; we learn the use of the word partly by learning what characteristics various societies ascribe to their gods; at a later stage we refine our conception, and also understand that the being who fulfils our specification must be unique. "I believe in one God", we then say, thereby excluding the conceptual possibility of a plurality of gods. It may still be true, however, that this excluded possibility has played a part in our coming to understand the word "God".

X

Eunomius, I think, makes two distinguishable errors. The first is to say that only one term is properly applicable to God, as signifying his essence. The second is to suggest that this term ἀγέννητος, is proper in the sense of giving a complete specification of what is comprised in the being of God. This latter point is so generally condemned that I shall not enlarge on it. The former point has rather more basis in tradition; thus Philo maintains that the phrase ὁ Ὄν is not really a name, since there is no name at all which properly applies to God—οὐδὲν ὄνομα τὸ παράπαν ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ κυριολογεῖται, ᾧ μόνῳ πρόσσεστι τὸ εἶναι. But Philo does not develop this last phrase; on the contrary, as we have seen, he pictures God as revealing a name to men, and also as exercising a variety of functions, δυνάμεις, in virtue of which we may use names like κύριος and θεός. Unfortunately these powers often appear to detach themselves as autonomous beings like the angels, who are at least theoretically able to escape from God’s control, like the Aeons of the Gnostics. At this point a better picture is already outlined by Justin:³⁸ “the Father of all has no given name, being ingenerate”, since, he adds rather naively, this would imply some more senior divinity who gave him such a name; “but ‘Father’ and ‘God’ and ‘Creator’ and ‘Lord’ and ‘Master’ are not names, but appellations (προσρήσεις) derived from his beneficent actions”. Basil and Gregory follow, broadly speaking, in this track, and in this respect I have no fault to find with them. I am uneasy with regard to one assumption, which I think they share with Eunomius, namely that a perfectly simple being can exercise a plurality of operations or energies. I can see no way of construing the term “simple” which would make this intelligible, let alone squaring with the Biblical tradition. But this enormously important question must be set aside. Possibly the nature of divinity itself requires that it should not be answerable, and, we must end by confessing, *omnia exeunt in mysterium*.

38 Justin, *Apologia* II 6,2 (SC 507, 332).

The Divine Simplicity: *Contra Eunomium* I 223–241*

Anthony Meredith

Introduction

There are certain general problems touching Gregory's theology which are worthwhile outlining at the outset. Of these perhaps the most important is what sort of writer Gregory was, especially as he appears before us in this work. He was by training and inclination a skilled rhetorician, in the tradition though not in the school of Libanius.¹ But he also showed some interest in and knowledge of philosophy. Indeed, some of his writings are explicitly concerned with subjects of philosophical interest, notably *De hominis opificio* and the *Vita Macrinae*. Which is primary in his general approach? Are we to think of him as a rhetorician using philosophical terms or as a philosopher with considerable powers of self-expression? The question is complicated by two factors. At the beginning of his second *Treatise against Eunomius* Gregory writes that, whereas in his first treatise he had argued from the teachings of the church alone, without the aid of arguments drawn from outside, in the second he proposed to be less restricted in his method.² How seriously are we to take this statement? As we shall see in what follows, there is no small amount of philosophical lan-

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see A. Meredith, "The divine simplicity: *Contra Eunomium* I 223–241," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 339–351. For further bibliography on this topic: C. Stead, "Divine Simplicity as a Problem for Orthodoxy," in: R. Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, Cambridge 1989, 71–84; L.F. Mateo-Seco, "Atributos y simplicidad divina en el *Contra Eunomium* II de Gregorio de Nisa," in: T. Trigo (ed.), *Dar razón de la esperanza*, Pamplona 2004, 381–399; J. O'Leary, "Divine Simplicity and the Plurality of Attributes," in L. Karfiková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber, *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies*, Leiden 2007, 307–338; A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009; M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names: Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Leiden 2010; M. Brugarolas, "Divine Simplicity and Creation of Man. Gregory of Nyssa on the Distinction between the Uncreated and the Created," *ACPQ* 91 (2017) 29–51.

1 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep* 11 (GNO VIII/2, 41–42); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep* 11 (GCS 53, 21–22); cf. also the remark of Macrina at *An et res* (GNO III/3, 111).

2 *CE* II 9 (GNO I, 228,24–229,9).

guage in book 1. Perhaps, as H.F. Cherniss observes, “he desires that none may be able to charge him, as he charges Eunomius, with being a pagan in disguise, even with knowing too much pagan philosophy.”³ This is alleged as a reason for the total lack in Gregory’s writing of any mention of a pagan philosopher, despite the fact that he most certainly had familiarity with their writings. I am quite convinced that Gregory’s use of philosophical ideas is not merely cosmetic ornament; they enter quite profoundly into the structure of his thinking. On the other hand he is not a philosopher in the sense in which that word is applied to Aristotle.

A second problem for the interpreter of this work is the “fairness” with which Gregory treats the position of Eunomius. A good deal has been written and said about the part played by traditional polemic in the opening sections of the work. Nor is rhetoric lacking in the more explicitly theological portion of the treatise. So, for example, in each of the three sections of the chapter under consideration, Gregory begins by advancing in a formal way the unexceptional interpretation of Eunomius’ statements, only to dismiss it a little later in favour of a more obnoxious and, from Gregory’s viewpoint, a juster understanding of the Anomoean case.⁴ There is no suggestion, however, that behind the somewhat arid dogmatic formulations of Eunomius it is possible to find anything like a religious vision. He is simply portrayed as a somewhat arid logic chopper. Unfortunately we have no means of knowing what Eunomius thought of Gregory’s work or whether he planned some brilliant response. Either he died before he had composed it—he was a slow writer, if the length of time he took to reply to Basil with his *Apologia apologiae* is anything to go by, perhaps fifteen years—or his persecution was such that no opportunity presented itself of replying to Gregory. What we do know is that he must have been a brilliant debater, who not only seems to have got the better of Basil in 360,⁵ but also was kept well away from the emperor Theodosius by the zealous protectionism of the orthodox empress, Flacilla.⁶

3 H.F. Cherniss, *The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa*, (Classical Philology, XI), Berkeley 1930; cf. also W. Jaeger in his review of “H. Merki, ὁμολωσις θεῶν”, *Gnomon* 27 (1955) 573–581.

4 On three occasions in the chapter here under review Gregory employs this device, indicating the favourable reading of Eunomius with a “μέν” and then proceeding to the true sense with a “δέ”. So compare CE I 226 (GNO I, 92,26) and CE I 228 (GNO I, 93,15); CE I 231 (GNO I, 94,17) and CE I 232 (GNO I, 94,23); CE I 238 (GNO I, 96,17) and CE I 239 (GNO I, 96,22).

5 Cf. CE I 72 ff. (GNO I, 47 f.).

6 Sozomen, HE VII 6,3 (SC 506, 32); and, for the orthodoxy of Flacilla, *Flacill* (GNO IX 489,4). The importance of women in the dogmatic controversies of the period is quite striking, not only

A third question of some importance is the sort of unity which in this treatise Gregory predicates of the deity, which relates immediately to the charge of tritheism, or “Neonicene” made against him while he lived and more recently. The answer to this question will be found in the treatment of *CE* I 227 and the meaning given to the expression.

Finally, in his book, *Being as Communion* Professor Zizioulas writes:

The basic ontological standpoint of the Greek Fathers is that ... no substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, but the ontological principle or cause of being—i.e., that which makes a thing to exist—is not the substance or nature, but the person or hypostasis. Therefore being is traced back not to substance but to person.⁷

The main motive of his move is to emancipate theology, above all in the person of the Cappadocian fathers, from the stranglehold of “Seinsphilosophie,” which makes being or nature primary and person only an appendage or expression of a common nature. Zizioulas claims to find this, what he terms “prosopic,” approach verified in the writing of Basil. It is true that, as we shall see, the language of Basil is more resolutely biblicist than is that of his brother, though, as H. Langerbeck has warned us,⁸ when writing of his brother, it is illegitimate to infer from adhesion to biblical language to a like preference for biblical ideas. Gregory’s own language about God, however, leaves a good deal of doubt as to whether he falls into the same camp as does his brother. An instructive example of the differing approaches of the two brothers may be seen by comparing Basil’s unwillingness to define or describe God as He who is and Gregory’s preparedness to do so.⁹

that of Macrina over her brother, but also at Ephesus the influence of Eudokia and Pulcheria and at Chalcedon of Pulcheria.

⁷ J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, London 1985, 41 nt. 37.

⁸ H. Langerbeck, “Zur Interpretation Gregors von Nyssa,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 82 (1957) 81–90.

⁹ “He who is” or “That which is” is a favourite definition/description of God in Gregory at *CE* I 618; 641; 651 (GNO I, 204; 210; 213); cf. *CE* I 422; 479; 485 (GNO I, 149, 165, 167). Contrast Basil, *CE* I 13 (SC 299, 218–220).

I Section 223–230

The structure of the argument at this point has already been noted. In its course Gregory makes three points. The first of these is merely abusive and does little to further his case. He states that, far from basing his position on revelation or on human arguments,¹⁰ Eunomius bases his case on his own “ipse dixit.”¹¹ The phrase comes from Pythagoreanism and was used to designate the attitude of acceptive obedience to the precepts of the Master required by the novices in his system. Later it became a frequent jibe made by the pagan critics of the Gospel, as many passages testify.¹² A similar example of Gregory’s use of traditional abuse is his labelling his opponent’s system “an old wives’ tale,”¹³ an expression of which the first recorded instance is in Plato’s *Theaetetus*,¹⁴ and there are other instances.¹⁵ In a further effort to discredit Eunomius’ position, Gregory makes the interesting claim in section 229 that “the church teaches ... that in three persons and hypostases we should believe in no difference where being is concerned.”¹⁶ Gregory’s claim that he has the church on his side in asserting such a formula leaves open the difficult question as to which church pronouncement he can be referring to. One thing is quite clear, it cannot be the council of Constantinople of 381, which was not only as yet a thing of the future, but also contained no phrase of the type referred to by him. Again, although it does contain phraseology not unlike that here employed, it is also improbable that Gregory is referring to the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* of 362. The two most plausible contenders for the referent are 1) the council of Nicaea and 2) the generally accepted teaching of the church at the time of writing, i.e. 380. The central objection to the first view is that it never uses the language attributed to it; and to the second position that, though such views were undoubtedly maintained in Cappadocia at the time,¹⁷ there is no very good reason for referring to this as the decision of the church. Faced with these two alternatives,¹⁸ the latter position, despite its drawbacks, seems marginally preferable.

10 CE I 230 (GNO I, 94,13).

11 CE I 225 (GNO I, 92,22).

12 Diogenes Laertius, *Hist. Phil.* 18,17; 46; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1,7; 4,9 (SC 132, 92–94; SC 136, 206); Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* 4,102 (SC 309, 250); 27,8 (SC 250, 88–90).

13 CE I 230 (GNO I, 94,11).

14 Cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b.

15 Cf. Jaeger ad loc. and Porphyry, *De abstinencia* 4 16.

16 CE I 229 (GNO I, 94,1–5).

17 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 31,9 (SC 250, 290–292).

18 It is perhaps worth referring to the exchange between Professors L. Abramowski (in favour of Nicaea) and B. Studer (for the other alternative).

When we come to inspect Gregory's actual case two points need making. In section 224 he argues against Eunomius that the main result of the latter's dogmatic credo is to divorce the three persons of the Trinity entirely from each other. This means that there is no *συνάφεια* of Father and Son or of Son and Spirit. Instead of the *synapheia* or connexion there is a break between and subordination among the three persons. The assumption of the argument is that the condition of the possibility of connexion among the three is the possession by each of the same nature. Now it is perfectly true, as Professor Abramowski has cogently argued,¹⁹ that in later Patristic literature the word *συνάφεια* is not infrequently used to mean the same as *ἀσύγχυτος ἕνωσις*, and therefore often, although not always, as some of her examples prove, to imply an equality on the part of the partners. Gregory's usage, however, in several places assumes a difference between the two members of the "connexion."²⁰ In other words, on the Abramowski argument Gregory's case works better than on any other one, but there seems no absolutely convincing reason for assuming that sense in this place.

We now come to the thorny issue of the precise sort of unity in the deity argued for or assumed by Gregory in the passage beginning in 227. Up to that point Gregory had argued that if the primary aim of Eunomius had been to argue against Sabellianism, then he, Eunomius, would have the suffrage of Gregory.²¹ Gregory's antisabellianism comes as something of a surprise when we consider the reputable scholarly opinion that has tried to forge a link between Gregory and Marcellus of Ancyra,²² whose advocacy of a strongly monadic conception of the deity is normally accepted. Gregory then deploys his own understanding of the unity of the Trinity with the help of the well-known analogy of three men sharing the same genus, Peter, James and John. All three men share in the same nature even as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost share in the same divine nature.

This passage has been widely discussed by Harnack, Grillmeier and, most recently and thoroughly, by R. Hübner.²³ All three argue that in this passage (*CE*

19 L. Abramowski, *Drei Christologische Untersuchungen*, Berlin 1981. Cf. esp. Proclus, *In Parmenidem* 749,37; Sallustius, *De diis et mundo* 16; 17; and the commentary and introduction by A.D. Nock, *Sallustius. Concerning the Gods and the Universe*, Cambridge 1926.

20 *An et res* (GNO III/3, 45; 64).

21 *CE I* (GNO I, 93,1).

22 R.M. Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa. Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der Physischen' Erlösungslehre*, Leiden 1974.

23 R. Hübner in his article "Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sogenannten Epist. 38 des Basiliius", in: J. Fontaine—Ch. Kannengiesser (eds.), *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au*

1227) Gregory teaches a generic rather than a numerical identity in the Trinity. He adduces several passages from other works of Gregory which largely use the expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας and which are therefore open to a pluralist interpretation. This is above all the case in two letters once assigned to Basil and now ascribed to his brother, letters 38 and 189, the latter being printed in GNO III/1 under the title *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate*.

Bethune Baker has tried to argue against the general tendency of assigning Gregory, as Harnack and Zahn had done, to the Neonicene circle.²⁴ He argues on the basis of passages like *Ad Graecos, Ex communibus notionibus*²⁵ that Gregory made a clear and consistent distinction between “nature” (φύσις) and “being” (οὐσία). But though the distinction may work for that particular writing, it will simply not do for the *Contra Eunomium* 1, where in sections 231 and 232 the two words are used without any perceptible difference of meaning.

Several other texts may be adduced in favour of the conclusion that is, at any rate for the *Contra Eunomium*, beginning to emerge. There is a text in CE III/5 22 where Gregory appears deliberately to correct what his brother had written in his own CE II 4.²⁶ This text and what Gregory seems to be about have been explored by D. Balás and R. Hübner, and the upshot is that, whereas Basil wanted to give the divine unity a more material, physical force, Gregory, by the simple addition of an οὐ, has changed the meaning to that of second substance, in the Aristotelian sense. But this is not the only place at which Gregory differs from his brother. Basil in his CE III 6,7 was willing to apply the term μονάς to the whole of the deity, not simply, as Origen had done, to the first person only.²⁷ This strict unitarianism on the part of Basil can be paralleled in the eighth letter of Basil, which is now universally given to Evagrius Ponticus. In that letter Evagrius insists that the terms “monad” and “henad” are appropriate to the divine nature as such.²⁸ These examples show that Gregory’s was not the only option open to theologians exploring the Trinity.

But even in Gregory himself it is possible to find examples of a similar insistence on the unity of God. We do not have any clear manner of dating Gregory’s

cardinal Jean Daniélou, Paris 1972, 463–490, gathers most of the texts, cf. esp. Ep. 38 of “Basil” (= Gregory of Nyssa) and *Graec* (GNO III/1 31,1–7); CE I 174; 496 (GNO I, 78; 169–170).

24 J.F. Bethune-Baker, *The Meaning of the Homoousios in the ‘Constantinopolitan’ Creed*, Texts and Studies 7/1, Cambridge 1901.

25 Cf. esp. *Graec* (GNO III/1, 21,20).

26 Cf. CE III/5 22 (GNO II, 167–168); Basil, CE II 4 (SC 305, 18–22).

27 Cf. Basil, CE III 6,7 (SC 305, 166).

28 Cf. Basil, Ep 8,2,20 (Courtonne I, 24).

little treatise, *Ad Ablabium, quod non sunt tres dei*. E. Hardy²⁹ inclines to the view that the work should be dated to the year 375, but offers no evidence in favour of such a dating. It seems very much more probable that the work was written as a direct reply to the slur cast on his own orthodoxy, which he was always eager to vindicate,³⁰ by the suggestion that his views led to tritheism. In answer to this charge he was prepared to use the word *μονάς* in his description of the whole divine nature,³¹ which is much more in line with the usage of Basil and Evagrius just mentioned that with his own practice in the *Contra Eunomium*. If, therefore, he is correcting either the view or, at least, the inferences from the views expressed there, it would seem reasonable to date the work to later than 380/1. Perhaps the fact that he refers to himself in *Ad Ablabium* as an old man³² may add some support to this later dating, as being a more appropriate description for a man of over fifty than for one who was only about forty-five.

II Section 231–237

First of all, something must be said about the account Gregory here gives of his understanding of the divine nature. To begin with, it is in section 231 highly Platonic in character: “it is formless and shapeless, nor do any concepts of size or magnitude apply to it.” It is also said to exceed or transcend thought.³³ The word *ἄσχημάτιστος* is particularly instructive, for not only does it occur elsewhere in this work and in other writings of Gregory,³⁴ it also goes back to the description of supreme and static reality in Plato’s *Phaedrus*,³⁵ whence it passed either directly or by intermediaries to Plotinus. In at least two passages in the *Enneads* the *Phaedrus* influences Plotinus’ description of supreme reality, at I 6,5,9, where the words probably apply to Spirit, but perhaps to the One, and at V 5,11,4, where the absence of shape or form is definitely referred to the supreme principle, the One. The similarity of thought persists when it is

29 E.R. Hardy (ed.), *The Christology of the Later Fathers*, London 1954.

30 H.F. Cherniss, *The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa*, (Classical Philology, XI), Berkeley 1930, 63: “He would be orthodox at any cost of intellectual integrity”—a harsh and unfounded judgment.

31 *Abl* (GNO III/1, 41,3).

32 *Abl* (GNO III/1, 37,8).

33 *CE* I (GNO I, 94,18).

34 *CE* I 300; II 107 (GNO I, 115; 258); *Virg* (GNO VIII/1, 290,25; 293,7).

35 Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 247c.

realised that for Plotinus in precisely this passage and what immediately precedes it the One is said to transcend Spirit, whereas for Gregory the divine nature is said to transcend “every mind.” It would be too much to argue from these slight external similarities that Gregory here depends on the *Enneads*. On the other hand, the general atmosphere of the two passages is alike. It is also worth noting that, according to Basil’s *CE* I 23, Eunomius used such language of the divine nature himself, though it is not the sort of language Basil himself employs.³⁶ On this, as on other points, Gregory’s language seems much more imbued with the philosophical tradition than does that of his more “biblicist” brother.³⁷

There is another linguistic point where Gregory is decidedly more abstract and less personalist than his brother. In section 233 Gregory refers to his God as “the divine,” τὸ θεῖον.³⁸ This is by no means an isolated example, and parallels may be found elsewhere in Gregory,³⁹ above all in *De anima et resurrectione*, but again, instructively, not at all in Basil’s *Contra Eunomium*. It is found also in Evagrius, *De oratione* 68, where it occurs alongside ἀσχημάτιστον. Like this last word, “the divine” has a classical prehistory, and occurs for the first time in Herodotus’ *Histories* I 32, where the divine is said to be free from all jealousy. Plato uses the word at *Symposium* 211e. Interestingly, though, Athenagoras in his *Legatio* VII 1, while admitting that the philosophers use the term to describe the supreme being, notes that “we insist that he who ordered the universe is God,” sc., personal. We may so far conclude, as far as language goes, that Gregory belongs on the more philosophical side as against Athenagoras and Basil, but alongside Evagrius, whom he may have taught.

It is worth remarking that, despite Gregory’s proclivity here and elsewhere for impersonal, absolutist language about the divine nature, he is also insistent that God is moral agent, who not only acts powerfully and freely in time and history, but who is always constricted or qualified in his action by his goodness, wisdom and justice. These qualities are found together in section 233 and also in many places in the *Oratio Catechetica*.⁴⁰ It could be argued that, because Gre-

36 Cf. Basil, *CE* I 23 (SC 299, 254).

37 W. Jaeger (*Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature*, Leiden 1954) notes that Basil never describes the monk as a “philosophos,” unlike his brother, but this difference must not be pressed too hard.

38 *CE* I 233 (GNO I, 95,10).

39 For *An et res* (GNO III/3, 11,2; 39,14; 45,18; 66,10.17; 71,2.14; 89,2; 91,9; 92,20; 94,1.13). cf. also Langerbeck’s comment on the variant reading in the MSS. at *Cant* (GNO VI, 428,16), where he selects “to theion” before “ho theos.”

40 *Or Cat* III; XX (GNO III/4, 14; 53–54), where the whole understanding of the incarnation

gory here says that these qualities exist “around the divine,” they do not form the central core of his being, which has already been outlined in the language of an austere philosophy. Whether this points to some consistent position of Gregory which exalts the philosophical at the expense of the personal is not so clear.

Gregory’s main purpose in this section is to exclude any idea of degrees of simplicity in the divine nature. In order to secure his end, he employs the idea of the divine infinity. The argument runs as follows. To say that someone is more or less good, wise or powerful implies a distinction between the subject and the predicate. The subject may be said to possess the qualities he has but to be distinct from them, and this necessarily means that there is not perfect simplicity. Only where there is no participation of the subject in the predicate can there be true simplicity. But in God there is no question of participation in goodness. He is absolute goodness. At this point⁴¹ Gregory goes on to argue, in line with what he had already done in sections 168–169,⁴² that, because there is no distinction between subject and predicate in God, between God and his goodness, there are no limits to the divine goodness, and, consequently, where there are no limits to goodness we are in the presence of absolute goodness. And for Gregory absolute means infinite. And there can be no degrees of infinity. This last move enables Gregory to reject the Anomoean argument that there are degrees of simplicity. The argument, therefore, set out briefly, runs as follows.

More and less imply a distinction of subject and predicate, as in fact for all forms of participation. But the divine admits no such distinction, because divine goodness is infinite goodness, there being nothing to limit it. Therefore there is an intimate link between simplicity and infinity, and the confession of simplicity, made by Eunomius of all three persons, must lead to an assertion of equality by way of infinity.

It is not at all clear what connexion exists between these two ideas. The argument put forward at section 168 is that infinite goodness exists where there is nothing to limit it from within or without. The only thing that could be thought of as limiting goodness would be evil or, what for a Platonist like Gregory comes to the same thing, non-being. It follows, therefore, that where there is no non-being, there we have absolute, infinite being. But why should it follow? First of all, it does not follow from the fact that the definition of good does not allow room for its opposite that in the real order where there is no evil there

rests on the assumption that these epithets must not be considered in isolation from each other. cf. also *Maced* (GNO III/1, 92,13).

41 Cf. *CE* I 235 (GNO I, 95,23).

42 Cf. *CE* I 168–169 (GNO I, 77,7–22).

is unlimited goodness. If pressed to its logical extreme, it would seem to lead to the absurdity that every instantiation of an idea, manhood for example, was either imperfect or infinite. But, secondly, even on the platonic assumptions that underlie the argument, it does not follow that the perfect idea which is participated in and which does not itself participate must itself be infinite. Although it is true that Plato in *Republic* 509c describes the idea of the good as being above being in power and dignity, he never seems to have entertained the idea that the good was infinite.

Indeed, in the Platonic tradition we do not find the connexion insisted on by Gregory, between goodness, simplicity and infinity, in any writer until, possibly, Plotinus. Plutarch and Numenius in the pagan and Origen in the Christian platonic tradition insist equally on the simplicity of the supreme being, whether he be Apollo or the Father,⁴³ but none of them draws the conclusion that this supreme reality is infinite. As has been pointed out, it would have been odd if they had done so, considering the fact that for Plato form is the principle of order. Professor Mühlenberg has suggested that Gregory's insistence on infinity is owing entirely to his Christian faith.⁴⁴ In defending this position, that there is something radically Christian in this, he is forced to come to terms with those passages in Plotinus which have been advanced as evidence for his assertion of the infinity of the One.

The discussion of the idea of infinity in Plotinus⁴⁵ is concerned with the exegesis of three or four passages. In one remarkable place, *Ennead* 11 4,3,1, Plotinus makes, for a Greek, the unlikely assertion that the unlimited and formless is not necessarily to be despised, if it is to provide some material for formation to beings at a higher level. Here Plotinus is referring to his general position that each grade of being is informed by what is above it. So soul is matter to spirit, and to the One the spirit that is below it. Here, therefore, he is referring to "matter" as the unlimited and not to the One. Of the three passages where infinity

43 Plutarch, *Moralia* 381f; 393c (Froidefond, 245; Flacelière, 33); Numenius, *Fragments* 6; 11 (Des Places, 49; 53), Origen, *De Principiis* 1 1,6 (GCS 22 [V], 21–23); *In Iohannem* 1 20,119 (GCS 10 [IV], 24) and, for his denial of the infinity of God, the Greek text of *De Principiis* 11 9,1 (GCS 22 [V], 163–165).

44 E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, Göttingen 1966,—though his insistence on the essentially Christian character of the infinity of God seems to me not acceptable.

45 For a full discussion and analysis of the texts in question, cf. the debate carried on between L. Sweeney and W. Norris Clarke in *Gregorianum*: L. Sweeney, "Infinity in Plotinus", *Gregorianum* 38 (1957) 515–535; 713–732; W.N. Clarke, "Infinity in Plotinus: a Reply", *Gregorianum* 40 (1959) 75–98; L. Sweeney, "Plotinus Revisited", *Gregorianum* 40 (1959) 327–331.

is clearly and unequivocally applied to the One, at *Ennead* VI 9,6,1–20, Plotinus writes of the One that is without size and number, the smallest conceivable reality, yet gifted with a limitless power; at *Ennead* V 5,10,19–23 he writes: “it is infinite where its power is concerned.” The question is whether it is infinite in itself, as distinct from its power. The only passage where such an idea is clearly articulated is *Ennead* V 5,11,1–4. Here the idea seems to be that infinity is a result of there being nothing more than it and of the absence of anything to limit it or its possessions. The passage continues in a way already indicated, with the ascription to the One of the terms applied in *Phaedrus* 246c to the beautiful. Here we can see two important motives at work. First, Plotinus, though agreeing with Plato in ascribing formlessness to the supreme reality, goes beyond him in making the form limitless. Second, the collocation of epithets in Plotinus agrees so closely with those in *CE* I 231–236 that it may be argued that Gregory owes his perception about the infinity of the divine nature and its simplicity to the arguments of Plotinus. If this is so, it will mean that Gregory’s reply to Eunomius, far from abandoning the platonic tradition in a Christian direction, will be seen as the use of Neoplatonic insights with which to surmount the logic of the Anomoeans. It will mean that, contrary to common opinion, the orthodox position of the Cappadocians is more heavily dependent on philosophical arguments and ideas than is that of Eunomius—a position Gregory would have been unwilling to admit. It may be true that the demands of controversy led Gregory first to insist upon the divine infinity as a useful apologetic device, both for outlawing the idea of grades of power, goodness and simplicity in God and to insist that the condition of the possibility of our upward striving lies in the existence of a being who has no need or, indeed, possibility of striving (cf. esp. *CE* I 288–291).⁴⁶ But the notion of and arguments for this infinity, above all the one that absence of limit implies infinity, is a derivative of Plotinus, and not a specifically Christian contribution to the history of ideas. As to Gregory’s knowledge of Plotinus and his somewhat eclectic use of him, the evidence is, though not extensive, impossible to dispose of entirely.⁴⁷

46 Cf. esp. *CE* I 288–291 (GNO I, 111,17–112,20).

47 For the use of the One as applied to God see the passage in *Cant* 8 (GNO VI, 258 8; 15), asserted to be an “unverkennbar neuplatonischer Zug.” H. Dörrie insists that Gregory’s identification of “the good” with “being” in *Eccl* VII (GNO V, 406,7) (cf. also *An et res*, [GNO III/3, 68–69]) must be read as a clear rejection the Plotinian separation of the two ideas: cf. H. Dörrie, “Gregors Theologie auf dem Hintergrunde der neuplatonischen Metaphysik”, in: H. Dörrie—M. Altenburger—U. Schramm (Hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa, Freckenhorst bei Münster, 18.–23. September 1972*, Leiden 1976, 21–39.

III Section 238–241

Gregory begins his discussion by repeating, for the third time in the course of this chapter, the expression of Eunomius that each being (sc. member of the Trinity) is and is perceived to be simple and altogether one in its own rank. His main discussion centres round the expression applied to each person “simple in its own rank.” Gregory objects to the idea of grades of simplicity, as this might be held to imply that lesser simplicity meant inferior goodness with some element of composition, a view which in the previous section Gregory had just combated. It is in accordance with his often reiterated claim that all sorts of degree are out of place in the godhead. This applies to goodness and power,⁴⁸ being itself⁴⁹ (180–182) and simplicity.⁵⁰ This rejection of any notion of grades within the deity has often been regarded as administering the coup de grace to any idea of Hellenism being allowed to infiltrate into the gospel by such very diverse writers as H. Dörrie and H. von Balthasar.⁵¹ There is a good deal of attractiveness and truth in such a view, though it should not be pressed too hard, partly because the “Stufenlehre” of later Platonism was absorbed into the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, when it was claimed, for example, that all grace comes to us from the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit;⁵² partly because, if the argument of the foregoing section is correct, then the tool used by Gregory to overcome the Stufenlehre of Platonism was a doctrine of the infinity of the absolute, which, although applied to the divine nature rather than to the One, still derives its force from a consideration of philosophic rather than strictly religious grounds.

Gregory applied the idea of infinity to the divine nature as such, Plotinus applied it only to the first of his three hypostases, and therein lies the principle difference between them. But does this insistence on the connexion between the infinity and simplicity of God shed any further light on the subject raised in the first section about the nature of the divine unity? There it was concluded that in that passage in the *Contra Eunomium* Gregory was thinking in generic terms whose natural implication was a form of tritheism.⁵³ On the whole, Gre-

48 Cf. CE I 167–171 (GNO I, 77,1–78,3).

49 Cf. CE I 180–181 (GNO I, 79,28–80,7).

50 Cf. CE I 231–241 (GNO I, 94,15–97,20).

51 H. Dörrie: “Was ist ‘spätantiker Platonismus’? Überlegungen zur Grenzziehung zwischen Platonismus und Christentum,” *Theologische Rundschau* (1971) 285–302. H.U. von Balthasar, *Présence et pensée*, Paris 1942.

52 *Abl* (GNO III/1, 48,1).

53 R. Arnou: “Unité numérique et unité de nature chez les Pères, après le Concile de Nicée,”

gory insists on one godhead⁵⁴ or, in his exegesis of *John* 10,30 at *CE* I 503, on the oneness of being, shared in by three persons. In this Gregory has in mind more the generic unity of Origen⁵⁵ than the more unitary position of Athanasius in his treatment of this text at *Contra Arianos* II 33. Does the exclusion of any plurality implied by the Plotinian One modify such a pluralist picture? It seems to be the case that, as the point of the argument both in section 238ff. and in the preceding section is to insist that, so far as simplicity is concerned, there is no difference between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we must conclude that here too, as in s. 227, the divine nature bears a generic and not a particular sense. This means that, in so far as Gregory is a tributary of Plotinus in his discussion of the simplicity of the supreme being, for Plotinus the supreme being is the One, for Gregory the supreme being is the divine nature as expressed in the three persons of the Trinity. The divine nature is simple in Gregory, the One in Plotinus. In his *De Trinitate* book xv, St. Augustine provides an instructive contrast with Gregory; for in him what strikes us is the singleness of God. “Trinitas, Deus” is the mode of address⁵⁶ and is closer to the One of Plotinus than the simple divine nature equally shared in by all three persons of the Trinity.

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Gregorianum 15 (1934) 242–254; and, further to R. Hübner, “Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sogenannten Epist. 38 des Basiliius”, 463–490, cf. A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. IV (English Translation), Boston 1898, ch. 1, 84ff. and A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, I. *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, London 1975, esp. 370 nt. 36 and 373 on the discussion of “Basil” letter 38 (cf. also *CE* III/6 13 [GNO II, 190]).

54 Cf. *CE* I 531 (GNO I, 179–180).

55 Origen, *Contra Celsum* VIII 12 (SC 150, 198–200).

56 Augustine, *De Trinitate* xv 1,1 and the end of the work xv 28,51: “Domine Deus une, Deus Trinitas, quaecumque dixi in his libris de tuo, agnoscant et tui: si qua de meo, et tu ignosce et tui.”

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On *Energeia* in St Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* I

Torstein Theodor Tollefsen

In *Contra Eunomium* book I the concept of *energeia* plays a major role in St Gregory's anti-Eunomian polemics. When the term surfaces in this particular controversy it already has a long history in Greek philosophy, and in the 3rd century it played an important role in the philosophy of Plotinus. There is probably no reason to go back to Aristotle in order to highlight its meaning, rather the recent Plotinian use of the term is more interesting, that is if there really are reasons to believe that it played similar—of course not identical—roles in Plotinus and in the Trinitarian controversies of the 4th century. In this paper I shall investigate some aspects of Gregory's presentation and critique of Eunomius' theology in *Contra Eunomium* I as far as they concern the notion of *energeia*. Gregory's own doctrine of *energeia* is left out.¹ I shall also draw on other relevant sources in order to shed light on obscure passages in Eunomius' text.

If people know anything at all about Plotinus it usually is that he taught the emanation of levels of reality from a first principle, the One. People may also know some of his illustrations, such as the sun that issues rays of light or a source that flows over. Often such illustrations of emanation and the notion of emanation itself are taken for philosophical doctrine, but I believe they should not. They are just this: *illustrations* of a particular doctrine, but also *metaphors* that are made to convey or suggest something else, namely a rather advanced doctrine of causation, that is *the doctrine of double energeia* or, as I shall translate it, *activity*.² In a simplified way it may be put thus: whenever a higher hypostasis remains in its own realized internal activity it immediately issues an external activity on a lower level of being. The sun and its light is an illustration of this doctrine taken from the sensible world, but may also function as a metaphor: the sun as a perfect entity is internally active in itself, but because of this internal activity the sun also issues an external activity of light. If we move

1 In T.T. Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, Oxford 2012, I have made an investigation into Gregory's concept of *energeia* in the chapters 3 section a, 4 section a, 5 section a, and 6 section a.

2 Cf. T.T. Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, Oxford 2012, 9 and chapter 1 section b for a presentation of the Plotinian doctrine, with references to scholarly literature and to the sources.

to the intelligible world itself we may say that the One, as long as it remains in its own internal activity, issues an external activity that immediately turns into a new hypostasis, the Intellect. More precisely the external activity of the One, when it turns towards itself as derived from the first principle, is constituted as a new hypostasis with its own internal activity. The process moves on down to the Soul in all its varieties and ends in Nature that is too impotent to issue in further creative activity.³

How could this notion of causality contribute to shed light on the conceptual tools of the Trinitarian controversy? Maybe it tells very little. However, one thing is sure: the use of the terminology of *ousia*, *hypostasis*, and *energeia* for divine matters and especially for divine causality in the ordering of the divine sphere is already established in pagan philosophy before the 4th century. It is reason to believe that the background of the Christian use of this kind of terminology is philosophical, but it is even so not proper for modern scholarship to import the pagan conceptual schemes into Christian thought without due consideration. The only way to learn how Eunomius and Gregory understood and used this terminology is to establish its use by these thinkers themselves.

In *Contra Eunomium* book I Gregory makes a critical investigation of Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae*. The book itself is lost, but extensive fragments may be identified in Gregory's text. A try to construct Eunomius' argument therefore has to be based on Gregory's quotations, and it is probably wise to compare the resulting theology with what material we have besides from Eunomius. This is all the more necessary since the philosophical context in the quotations is so meagre that the doctrine of Eunomius seems rather obscure. The main issue here is divine causality that makes use of the *energeia*-terminology.

Earlier research claimed that Arianism and so-called Neo-Arianism were influenced by Neo-Platonism.⁴ I believe this is quite problematical. Balás says, referring to Vandebussche and Ivánka, that Eunomius' conception of the hierarchy of beings appears to be of Neo-Platonic inspiration. Kelly says about Aetius and Eunomius: 'In fact they were presenting a restatement of fundamental Christian dogma in terms of a Neo-Platonic metaphysic of three hierarchically ordered, mutually exclusive οὐσῆαι.' Both scholars think the notion of *hierarchy* is Platonic, but I cannot see that it is necessary to claim this. As often happens one wonders what Platonism and Neo-Platonism means when such

3 The *Ennead* 5.1–2 gives a detailed presentation of the process sketched above.

4 Cf. D. Balás, *ΜΕΤΟΥΣΙΑ ΘΕΟΥ, Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966, 25; and J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London 1977, 249. Unfortunately the reference to the last item in T.T. Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, Oxford 2012, 45 note 40, is mistaken.

labels are pasted on Christian thinkers. The label of Platonism is often without any distinctive content and becomes rather meaningless. We shall soon investigate the details of the Eunomian hierarchy, but I would already now say it has only a slight similarity with Plotinus' hierarchy of hypostases. Further, no Neo-Platonist could ever have agreed that the essence of the supreme God is intelligible, something claimed by Aetius and Eunomius.

In *Contra Eunomium* I, §§ 151–154 Gregory presents a long quotation from Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* that contains a description of the latter's theological system. The introductory clause is as follows (§ 151):

The whole statement of our doctrines comprises the highest and most authentic being (οὐσίαν), the one which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over all the rest, and a third which is in no way aligned with them, but subject to the one because of causation and to the other because of the activity (διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν) by which it exists; the activities which accompany the beings and the names appropriate to them being of course treated together for the comprehensive statement of the whole doctrine.⁵

The basic terms of the system Eunomius describes here and in the following paragraphs are οὐσία and ἐνέργεια, essence or being and activity. We shall first make a try to describe as accurately as possible what his doctrine amounts to, and then turn to Gregory's critique.

According to Eunomius there are three essences or beings hierarchically ordered. The second one is caused by the first and comes after it (μετ' ἐκείνην), but has supremacy over all other beings. The third is subordinated to the first because the first is its cause, and to the second since it is brought into being by the activity of the second. This could mean that the second being mediates the causal impulse from the first in such a way that the third is brought into being. The description gives the clear impression that both the second and, *a fortiori*, the third being are created. This impression is confirmed by Eunomius in his *Liber apologeticus*:⁶ Christ is both γέννημα and ποίημα. In *Apologia apologiae* Eunomius moves further to state that certain activities accompany the essences. The verbs are παρέπομαι (follow alongside) and ἔπομαι (follow or come after), which is a rather curious terminology for the relation between an

5 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 151 (GNO I, 72) The translation is Hall's. The Greek terms are inserted by me.

6 Eunomius, *Apologia* 12 (Vaggione 46–49).

essence and its activity.⁷ Eunomius goes further to state the simplicity and singularity in its own rank for each of his three beings. All three are followed by certain activities that are defined as 'lesser and greater', occupying primary and secondary ranks, one activity excelling another since 'the same activities produce identical works, and varied works reveal varied activities': God would not make the angels, stars and heaven, or man by the same activity. This seems to imply that there are as many activities as there are created beings or species of created beings. A divine activity is completely adjusted to a particular creature or species of creature, and a particular work or species of work match completely the activity that made it. These are the essential points of Eunomius' doctrine in Gregory's long quotation.

This doctrine gives rise to several questions. (1) First one might wonder if it could be possible to make a clearer statement about the divine causality that makes the second being of the Eunomian system. (2) Secondly, we should ask why Eunomius describes the relation between the essence and the activity the way he does. His choice of terms seems quite strange compared with traditional ways of speaking about activity. Would it be proper to say that building a house is an activity that 'follows' a carpenter, or to say that writing a poem 'follows' the poet, or that acting justly 'follows' a man? As a matter of fact it seems that the relation between an essence and its activity is rather loose, almost as if the activity came somehow 'between' the agent and its work. What reason could Eunomius have to suggest something like this? (3) Thirdly, what about the idea that an activity is commensurate with its work and that a work is neither more nor less than the activity that produced it? Probably it is not possible answer each of these questions separately, since I suspect the answer to each of them overlap with the others.

In what follows we shall first discuss the making of the second being. In order to get a clearer view of Eunomius' doctrine we turn to his *Liber apologeticus*. In § 23 he makes a whole series of important elucidations.⁸ He first (partly) states the principle we met with above, viz. that he judges the activity from its effects. Then he confirms the impression we got that the activity strangely 'follows' the essence, when he deems it 'not unhazardous' (οὐκ ἀσφαλές) to unite the activity with the essence. He has already stated in § 22 that God's activity is not the motion of his essence.⁹—We shall return to this below.—Eunomius further states that the divine essence is without beginning (ἄναρχον), simple, and

7 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 151–152 (GNO I, 72).

8 Eunomius, *Apologia* 23 (Vaggione 62–65).

9 Eunomius, *Apologia* 22 (Vaggione 62–63).

without end, while its activity does not have these properties. Why? Because if it had been without beginning, then its effect would be without beginning as well, and it cannot be without end, since if its effects come to an end, the activity that made them cannot be without end either. The Son of God, *qua* begotten—something admitted by all parties, must therefore be the result of a definite activity of the first being, viz. its will to make, and this will has a beginning (but probably no end, I should think).

How should we make sense of this? If the activity of willing to make the Son has a beginning, what kind of beginning does Eunomius have in mind? In his *Expositio fidei* he says that the Son is created and has a beginning, but he is 'genuinely begotten before the ages'.¹⁰ Eunomius does not seem to think then that the Son has a beginning in the ordinary temporal sense.¹¹ What does beginning (ἀρχή) mean here? Does it mean source of movement or source of being? Eunomius definitely intends to make an ontological gap between the first and the second being of his system, but how should this gap be understood?¹² If in the end he thinks of it in temporal terms, what kind of temporality does he have in mind? Before we try to answer this question a further piece of doctrine should be brought into the picture. Eunomius admits that the divine activity is eternal in one special sense, viz. as 'unbegottenly stored up in his [i.e. God's] foreknowledge prior (πρὸ) to the existence of the first-born'.¹³ We have the following picture then: on the one hand there is the eternal activity of foreknowledge, and on the other hand there is the beginning of the activity of making. Since that which is made cannot be eternal in the proper sense, it must originate in a quasi-temporal sphere 'between' God and the ages in which are all other creatures.

Does Eunomius' description involve God in any kind of temporal action when he claims that activities begin and end? This is difficult to decide. If God is by nature eternal, if there is an eternal activity of foreknowledge, and if all other activities He executes begin and end, then there is definitely some-

¹⁰ Eunomius, *Expositio fidei* (Vaggione 152–153).

¹¹ Here there seems to be a problem with Kopecek's interpretation of Eunomius, since he states that the Neo-Arian Trinity is arranged in a hierarchy of time and space (T.A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, Vol. 2, Cambridge [Mass.] 1979, 453). Kopecek qualifies this to mean 'pre-temporal time', but does not define this notion. I cannot see that Eunomius has bothered to make this any clearer.

¹² Here it might be interesting to consider carefully Gregory's 'Aristotelian' notion that there cannot be more or less in essence. This surfaces again and again in the sequence of *CE* 1163–185 (GNO I, 75–76).

¹³ Eunomius, *Apologia* 24 (Vaggione 64–65).

thing to explain. Eunomius says that ‘God needs nothing to order to bring what He intends into existence, at the same moment He intends it (ἄμα τε βούλεται), whatever He willed comes to be.’¹⁴ Since there is no elaborate context for this saying one might wonder how it should be understood. There are strategies that Eunomius could have applied to defend himself. However, they were probably not known to him. Aristotelian philosophy distinguishes between first and second ἐνέργεια, a distinction that made it possible for John Philoponus (ca. 490–ca. 570) to defend the Christian doctrine of creation against Neo-Platonist attacks.¹⁵ God may eternally be a creator in capacity (i.e. first *energeia* = possessing the full knowledge and power to create), while the act of creation *ad extra* (i.e. second *energeia*) consists in the immediate (non-temporal) transition by the divine will alone from not making into making. Creation, in short, begins temporally, but God does not act temporally. If such reasoning is sound, it might as well have saved the philosophical soundness of the Eunomian doctrine of the making of the Son, but it would of course not have convinced Gregory about the soundness of his theological claims. Even if Eunomius could have been saved from one particular philosophical blunder it does not follow that its overall doctrine is sound.

The above exposition leaves something to be desired, and it will hopefully be possible to fill in the picture a bit more when we now turn to a fuller treatment of Eunomius’ doctrine of activity. We have already seen that activities have a beginning (and an end), that they ‘follow’ the essences, and that they are commensurate with their results. The picture this leaves is that there is a certain gap between the three beings and that this gap is filled by activity. I have already pointed out how strange this picture is if we consider types of activity like the acts of building, writing, and acting justly. What is it that Eunomius tries to achieve by this kind of reasoning?

At the end of the section from his *Apologia apologiae* from which I started my exposition above, Eunomius says that disputes about the essences should be referred to the activities, while any dispute about the activities should be resolved with reference to the essences.¹⁶ If we put this another way, the method he recommends is the following: we may investigate the essences starting from the activities and we may investigate the activities starting from the

14 Ibid.

15 Cf. Philoponus’ third argument in *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, in H. Rabe (ed.), *Ioannes Philoponus, De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, Hildesheim 1963; translated by M. Share, *Philoponus. Against Proclus On the Eternity of the World 1–5*, London 2004. Cf. Aristotle, *De anima* II, chapter 1.

16 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 154 (GNO I, 73).

essences. It seems to be similar to what he recommends in the *Liber apologeticus*, when he says there are two roads to what we seek.¹⁷ We may start our reasoning from the essences or we may start from the activities. These procedures are applied in that work, but what is the point of this method? I believe this method of his brings us close to the essence of the Eunomian and Anomoean theology. In Vaggione's list of fragments there is a fragment ii, which is a quotation that Socrates Scholasticus believes is from Eunomius:

God does not know anything more about his own essence than we do, nor is that essence better known to him and less to us; rather whatever we ourselves know about it is exactly what he knows, and, conversely, that which he knows is what you will find without change in us.¹⁸

Vaggione accepts the fragment as genuine and says in his discussion that it seems 'that the chief reason for hesitating before pronouncing it genuine is its content'.¹⁹ In addition to the testimonies given by Vaggione, St John Chrysostom may be quoted from his *De incomprehensibili Dei natura homiliae* where he claims the Anomoeans teach exactly this:²⁰ 'I know God as God Himself knows Himself.' In my opinion this idea fits well into the picture Eunomius gives of his method. It fits his recommendation that we may investigate the essences. Now, what, then, is the essence of God? The concept that is commensurate with the divine essence is *unbegottenness* (ἀγεννησία). This notion seems reasonably clear. I suggest that it have a simple sense that would be the same for every kind of intellectual conception, divine or human. It is, however, not at all clear that this is commensurate with the divine essence as such in the way that it defines the divinity's 'in-itself'. Eunomius must for some reasons have thought that this is basically what it is to be God. What are these reasons?

If we turn to his *Liber apologeticus* we find reasons of a rather philosophical kind:²¹ since God must exist before all things, as the cause exists before its effects, in distinction from all things God is therefore unbegotten and must be unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος). Gregory quotes Eunomius who accuse his opponents of error when they claim that they 'have attributed the same

¹⁷ Eunomius, *Apologia* 20 (Vaggione 58–61).

¹⁸ Quoted from R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 179.

¹⁹ Cf. the discussion in R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 167–170.

²⁰ Cf. John Chrysostom, *De incomprehensibili* 11, 157–158 (SC 28bis, 154).

²¹ Eunomius, *Apologia* 7–8 (Vaggione 40–43). One find the same kind of philosophical reasoning in Aetius' *Syntagmaton*, cf. L.R. Wickham, "The Syntagmaton of Aetius the Anomean", *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968) 532–569.

being (τὴν αὐτὴν οὐσίαν) to the Begetter and to the Begotten'. On the one hand this last accusation seems quite strange. On a general principle one should acknowledge offspring to be of the same essence or nature as its begetter. There is, however, the Neo-Platonic concept of causality that claims that the effect is always ontologically inferior to its cause.²² But I really doubt that such a concept of causality is at work here. On the other hand, the terms Father and Son are of course not applied in the normal biological sense in theology, but even so one should think they are applied as a metaphor from ordinary usage, and in that case it would be rather strange if they did not attribute the same essence to the Begetter and the Begotten.

It is not at all philosophically convincing that unbegottenness is the sole adequate concept for the essence of God, but to move into that problematic would bring me off my track in the present article. My reason for diving into this topic at all—it probably looks like a digression—is Eunomius' knowability-thesis for the being of God. I have two remarks:

- (i) According to my reading, the knowability-thesis shows that the Anomoean controversy is an issue between (at least) two kinds of theology. I find the best illustration for this in St John Chrysostom's *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*. We have seen that Chrysostom quotes an Anomoean claim that 'I know God as God knows himself'.²³ With this claim in mind he asks if the angels pass their time asking questions about the divine essence, and he answers that they surely do no such thing, but rather they adore God and sing hymns with great awe. They stand before the mystery in holy fear.²⁴ I think we can say that according to the Cappadocians and John Chrysostom naming God is an *art* of a philosophical, theological, and even liturgical kind, and not a professional technique like the one demonstrated by Aetius and Eunomius. Even if it is wrong to say that the Anomoeans are influenced by Neo-Platonism, I still think there is some influence on their theological mentality that stems from some external source.
- (ii) What has just been said, however, is because of the Eunomian doctrine stated above: we may investigate the essences starting from the activi-

22 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.1.7. See Armstrong's note (2) in the Loeb edition (vol. v, 38): 'Did he consider himself inferior to his parents?' Why should the effect always be inferior? Could the reason be that whenever a new entity emerges the manifold of the cosmos increases, which contributes to a further move away from the basic and original unity?

23 John Chrysostom, *De incomprehensibili* 11, 157–158 (SC 28bis, 154).

24 Cf. *Ibid.* I, 308–312, 321 (SC 28bis, 126–128).

ties and we may investigate the activities starting from the essences. In his polemics, Gregory focuses extensively on this claim. We shall concentrate on the first part of it, viz. the reasoning from activities to essences. If work is commensurate with activity and activity is commensurate with essence, then we should be able to know the cause from the effect. There is one effect and one activity in particular that gives the best clue to the divine essence, viz. the Son and the activity of begetting of the Son. This leads directly to the conception of the cause as unbegotten essence. Gregory's attack on Eunomius' understanding of activity brings us back to Eunomius' statement that activities accompany or follow the essence. Gregory asks what is meant with 'follow' or 'accompany' (ἔπονται), whether it means that the activities are something 'other than the things they accompany' (ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὰς οὐσίαις αἷς παρέπονται) or are parts of them and of the same nature.²⁵ If the activities are something 'other', how or whence did they come to being? If they are the same as the essence, how did they come to be cut off—since they accompany them *externally* (ἔξωθεν)—instead of coexisting with the essences?—Of course, the 'externally' is contributed by Gregory, but seems justified.—As I remarked above, it seems quite strange to say that the activity of building accompanies or follows a carpenter.

Gregory's critical question seems philosophically justified. The terminology used by Eunomius leaves a lot to be desired. If activities are distinct from essence, which they obviously are when they 'follow' or 'accompany' it, then how did they originate? Probably one should have to answer that they originate from the essence that through such activities moves to a definite work. But exactly how do they originate? As we have seen already, Eunomius says in his *Liber apologeticus* that activity is not a kind of motion of the essence, since if it was this could be made the basis of a claim that the cosmos exists simultaneous with God.²⁶ And, of course, it could also be the basis for asserting the coeval being of Father and Son. Activities, Eunomius claims, have beginning and end, and in order to reach his conclusions about the secondary being of then Son, he has to fit the activity to the essence in as loose a manner as possible. To Gregory it almost looks as if the divine activity achieves some kind of quasi-hypostatic being 'between' cause and effect.²⁷ And this quasi-hypostatic power, Gregory

25 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 207 (GNO I, 87).

26 Eunomius, *Apologia* 22 (Vaggione 62–63).

27 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 247 (GNO I, 99).

assumes, is what Eunomius conceives as the proper 'Father' of the Son. As a matter of fact, this is what Eunomius says in *Liber apologeticus*:²⁸ 'for the designation 'Son' makes his own essence clear, while that of 'Father' manifests the action (ἐνέργειαν) of the one who begot him.' For this reason, Gregory asserts that in the Eunomian system, the Son is not the second, but the third reality of the hierarchy, and the Holy Spirit is not in the third place, but in the fifth.²⁹

Gregory also attacks Eunomius' general idea that 'the same activities produce identical works, and varied works also reveal varied activities'.³⁰ As we shall see, however, aspects of his critique are a bit problematic. Why does Eunomius claim this? The answer is that he probably tries to keep the commensurability between a work, the activity by which it was made, and its cause. Gregory adduces several examples to show why this is wrong. Fire has one activity, viz. making hot, but the 'works' or results differ extensively: copper melts, clay hardens, wax dissolves etc. If one takes the example of skills, the result, according to Gregory, is the same: the use of the hand produces a lot of different results. The difference is obviously not in the movement of the hand, but, I would say, in the paradigm of making, which is a mental notion and not an activity. It is obvious that Gregory's first example is the most successful: there are different kinds of results, but the activity of heating is the same. I find it difficult, however, to accept Gregory's example of the skills. What results from the activity of building is a house, from the activity of writing comes a poem, and from the activity of acting justly a just result occurs. Now, a house, a poem, and a just result are results of the activities of building, writing, and acting justly. But would it not be strange to say that building, writing, and acting justly are the same activity? It is, perhaps, possible to say that the first two are the same in a generic sense, since both involve the use of hands. But what shall we say about acting justly? If one can act justly without the use of hands, which one obviously can, then acting justly does not belong to the same genus as building and writing.

Does Gregory's attack fail, then? I don't think so. He argues that we cannot know the nature of something by moving directly from work to activity and from activity to being or essence. Could we then say that we might know what x is capable of, but not what it is to be x? Gregory does not admit even this. However, for the sake of argument he accepts that the activity is commensurate with the product, but 'all that is deduced from the work is, not what the

28 Eunomius, *Apologia* 25 (Vaggione 66–67). Vaggione's translation, Greek term inserted by me.

29 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 248–249 (GNO I, 99).

30 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE I* 386 (GNO I, 135).

activity is in its own nature, but only how much of it is observed in the work, which is of course true.³¹ And Gregory continues: 'Not all the smith's ability (δύναμις) is deployed when he makes a gimlet, but the skill of the craftsman operates only so much as is sufficient for the manufacture of the tool, though it is capable of fashioning many things and of all kinds.' Even if the activity is commensurate with the work, it does not follow that it reveals its own nature or the nature of the one who executes the activity.³² I think generally that even if we may differentiate between human activities it does not follow that we may differentiate in the same way between divine activities. I suppose it is not differences in creative activity that makes the differences between created natures, but rather the divine paradigm behind God's activity: creation consists in external acts that realizes paradigms in created otherness.³³ Gregory's main point, as we shall return to below, is just to stress that even if we may know the divine activity, we should not think that we may comprehend it in our understanding, and this is all the more true of the power on which the activity is based, and in the highest degree it is true of the essence on which the power is based.

It is, of course, methodologically a weak procedure to reason from work to activity to essence. Gregory admits for sure that this kind of reasoning has a certain value, but it cannot achieve the kind of adequate knowledge of essences that Eunomius claims it can. It is an acknowledged Cappadocian strategy as well that we know our God from his activities, but to know him from the activities is not to know him essentially.³⁴ There is no immediate access to essence. Whatever we may perceive when something shows itself, the thing itself is always richer than what is known about it.³⁵ When one reads through Eunomius' writings one gets the impression that he advocates a method of knowing God's essence from his activities, but I cannot see that he anywhere sets the method to use in such a way that one may conceive accurately how he achieves his result. It is as a matter of fact easy to admit that unbegotten-

31 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 424 (GNO I, 150).

32 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 425 (GNO I, 150).

33 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione* (GNO III/3 96f.) and *In hexaemeron* (GNO IV/1, 14).

34 One may, for instance, consult St Basil's *Letter* 234.

35 This reminds one of what Husserl says in *Ideas* (1983, 3): 'The specific character of certain categories of essences is such that essences belonging to them can be given only 'onesidedly', in a sequence 'many-sidedly', yet never 'all-sidedly'.' There is, of course, no *eidetic seeing* of the essence of God. We have no access to his *Eidos*. On the other hand, I think modern phenomenology could be adjusted to a fruitful description of the epistemic issue in the Anomoean controversy.

ness is a divine predicate, but it is not obvious that it is *the* essential feature. It might well be, as the Cappadocians claim, a hypostatic property of one of the hypostases of the Trinity. And the Cappadocian idea that God is known from his activities is obviously much more satisfactory than the Eunomian since the divinity is uncreated and transcendent: the Cappadocians do not claim that one knows the divinity essentially, as a 'thing in itself', only that one knows God as the one who acts in such and such a way. Gregory even indicates, as we have seen above, that we do not even know the deep nature of the activity, nor of the skill or power it is based on, and particularly not the essence from which the power springs.³⁶ There is no scientific theology of exact terminological and conceptual character, but there is the poetic, liturgical theology that sings the praises of Him Who Is.

If now the Anomeoan project fails and the Cappadocian project only achieves an imprecise poetical, theological nomenclature, is not theology in a rather insecure, exposed situation? Maybe it is! Is there any secure ground to be found anywhere? In his *Ad Ablabium* Gregory says we form our appellations for God from the activities of divine power, and such activities are probably witnessed in the Scriptures.³⁷ They may be activities of creating, judging, saving, doing good, etc. According to Gregory, the names we use interpret our conceptions of God and do not give access to the divine nature as such. But how are the names justified? Gregory points to the tradition of the church.³⁸ I suggest this means that the criteria for the selection of appropriate names are the Scriptures and the formula of traditional worship. We should address God according to the common practice of prayer and the common sources of faith. This is confirmed by Gregory's initial critique of Eunomius in the *Contra Eunomium*.³⁹ Gregory accuses Eunomius for unscriptural language when he speaks of his 'beings' or 'essences' instead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Whatever the sources of Eunomian theology, we can say for sure that there is not much Neo-Platonism in it. No Neo-Platonist (in this case we have to think of Plotinus) would have said that God's essence is knowable or that there can be no eternal effect of the first being. However, what about Plotinus' external activity that turns into a new hypostasis, is not this activity somehow separated

36 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 424–425 (GNO I, 150); cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus* 7 (GNO VII/2, 150).

37 Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium* (GNO III/1, 44), cf. GNO III/1, 42–44 for the following. Cf. T.T. Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, Oxford 2012, 52–54.

38 Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium* (GNO III/1, 38–39).

39 Gregory of Nyssa, *CE* I 155–156 (GNO I, 73–74).

from its source almost like Eunomius' 'Father'? I don't think there is much similarity here either. The external activity never begins or ends, but is the eternal activity of the One, and as such it does not achieve hypostatic character. But when (not in any temporal sense) this activity turns in upon itself it is separated and constituted as an entity in its own right. At a certain moment in the procession (πρόοδος) the Intellect is constituted, not as being the activity of the One, but as turning towards the One. There is nothing like this in Eunomius, and we should of course never forget that the Intellect is eternal like the One, even if it has the One for its (non-temporal) cause.

There seems to be, I cannot help to think, some kind of external influence on the thought of Aetius and Eunomius, but it is probably not much to gain from trying to identify this, since the doctrines of the two must be judged from what they themselves have written and not from their sources. As it turns out, Gregory's critique of Eunomius seems to me rather sound.

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The Created and the Uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* I 270–295 (GNO I, 105–113)*

Alden A. Mosshammer

In the debate with Eunomius that he inherited from his brother, Basil, in 379, Gregory of Nyssa asserted a more radical and systematic distinction between the Creator and the creation than either he or any of his predecessors had previously felt called upon to make.¹ A number of important studies have shown how profoundly the Eunomian controversy shaped Gregory's own thinking and how central the radical contrast between the Creator and the creation became for the development of his most distinctive ideas.² Yet, as significant as this new

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see A.A. Mosshammer, "The created and the uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* 1,105–113," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 353–379. Some recent bibliography related to this topic: A.A. Mosshammer, "Disclosing but not Disclosed, Gregory of Nyssa as Deconstructionist," in: H.R. Drobner—C. Klock (eds.), *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der Christlichen Spätantike*, Leiden 1990, 99–123; B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1996; A. Lévy, "Aux Confins du créé et de l'incrété: les dimensions de l'épéctase chez Grégoire de Nysse," *RSPHTh* 84 (2000) 247–274; M.R. Barnes, "The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon," in: L. Ayres—G. Jones (eds.), *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, London—New York 1998, 47–67; Id., *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington D.C. 2001; X. Batllo, "Une évolution de Grégoire? La distinction *κτιστόν* / *ἄκτιστον* du CE I au CE III," in: J. Leemans and M. Cassin (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium III. An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies*, Leiden 2014, 489–499; M. Brugarolas, "Divine Simplicity and Creation of Man: Gregory of Nyssa on the distinction between the Uncreated and the Created," *ACPQ* 1/91 (2017) 29–51.

1 On the distinction of the Creator from the creation as an issue in the Eunomian debate see B. Otis, "Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958) 95–124, and B. Otis, "Gregory of Nyssa and The Cappadocian Concept of Time," *Studia Patristica* 14 (1976) 327–357.

2 See especially H.U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée: Essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1942; J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et Théologie Mystique: Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris² 1954; D.L. Balás, *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966; E. Mühlberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen*

understanding of the uncreated nature was for Gregory, he does not conceive of the radical discontinuity between the Creator and the creation as being in itself a completely adequate model for the structuring of reality. In fact, Gregory superposes the differentiation of the created from the uncreated upon a more traditional distinction between the intelligible and the sensible in such a way as to generate a dual division of being that defines existing things by reference to two different pairs of polarities. The twin antitheses of the created and the uncreated, the intelligible and the sensible, represent different perspectives on the nature of things, but they are related through a common criterion of analysis that differentiates among beings on the basis of their relative freedom or its absence.

In developing this new structure, Gregory abandons an earlier and in many ways traditionally Platonic dualism between body and spirit in favor of a more specifically Christian point of view. But at the same time his new set of antitheses, both in its paradoxical structure and in its underlying concern for the definition of created freedom, gives Christian expression to a more fundamental tension within the history of Greek culture between self-conscious freedom and all that stands in the way of its exercise. Gregory's own intellectual development in this respect may therefore serve as a case in point for the larger issue of how Greek culture came to see itself through Christian eyes.

I The Double Antithesis of *Contra Eunomium* I 270

Gregory presents his double antithesis between intelligibles and sensibles, the Creator and the created, in a well known passage of the first book *Contra Eunomium*, where he introduces his own understanding of the nature of reality as a positive argument upon which to rest the case against Eunomius.³ Gregory begins by stating that the highest division (*hê anôtatô diaeresis*) of existing things is that between the sensible and the intelligible.⁴ He appeals to the authority of St. Paul (cf. *Col* 1:16), who characterizes the creation as consisting of things both visible and the invisible. Paul includes all the senses generically under the faculty of vision, Gregory says, so that this passage may be taken as scriptural support for dividing reality between those things that are

Metaphysik, Göttingen 1966; M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983.

3 CE I 270–295 (GNO I, 105–113).

4 Cf. CE I 270 (GNO I, 105,19).

sensible and those that are not. When all sensible qualities are removed, Gregory continues, we are led naturally to infer the existence of what is incorporeal and intelligible. Similarly, reason leads us next to distinguish within intelligible things between the created and the uncreated. Among sensible things our bodily organs of sense can easily differentiate kind and degree by reference to the definite qualities that objects present. For intelligibles, some other method of differentiation must be discovered. Now the uncreated nature is the source and supply of all good, while the created is dependent on that good for its very existence. It follows that distinctions of greater and less can be made within the created, intellectual nature in accordance with the degree of inclination towards the good, as determined by the self-governing freedom (*autexousios prohaeresis*) of each such being. There can be no such distinctions within the uncreated nature, since it is in full possession of the good.⁵

What is most striking about this passage is that Gregory first divides existing things into the intelligible and the sensible, rather than the uncreated and all else. The whole point of the argument would seem to require that the supreme division be made between the created and the uncreated, with the created further subdivided into the intelligible and the sensible. Elsewhere, Gregory does divide existences between the created and the uncreated; and he emphasizes the sharp cleavage between the two orders.⁶ Indeed, in the third book *Contra Eunomium*, he explicitly says that the supreme division of existing things is that of the created from the uncreated, using the same phrase (*hê anôtatô diaeresis*) that he applies here in the first book to the distinction between the intelligible and the sensible.⁷ But in none of those instances does Gregory further subdivide the created order into the intelligible and the sensible. Wherever he brings the two antitheses together, Gregory always presents the distinction between the created and the uncreated as if it were a subdivision of the intellectual nature as distinct from the sensible. Such is the case not only here in the first book *Contra Eunomium*, both in the passage at issue and in the subsequent recapitulation,⁸ but also in the *In Canticum canticorum*,⁹ a work that is universally agreed to be Gregory's most mature. In fact these are the only three passages where Gregory makes a full and formal division of existences using

5 For the idea of participation in this passage see the discussion of D.L. Balás, *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966, 34–63.

6 E.g.: *CE* I 359–360 (GNO I, 133); *Maced* (GNO III/1, 104); *Or cat* XL (GNO III/4, 101–103); *Infant* (GNO III/2, 76–77).

7 Cf. *CE* III/6 66 (GNO II, 209, 19).

8 Cf. *CE* I 270–295 (GNO I, 105–113).

9 Cf. *Cant* VI (GNO VI, 173–174).

both distinctions. In all three texts, that between the intelligible and the sensible is the prior distinction. The language of the passage in the *In Canticum canticorum*, discussed in greater detail below, closely echoes that of the first book *Contra Eunomium*; and there is no indication that Gregory felt any difficulties about dividing reality in this way.

Now the priority of the antithesis between intelligibles and sensibles might be regarded as an undigested residuum of Platonism, left over from Gregory's earlier period, when the traditional dualism between spirit and matter dominated his works and he tended to assimilate the intelligible to the divine. We would then have a case of inconsistency between the way Gregory presents his thesis and what he really means by it.¹⁰ But there are in fact two very good reasons for Gregory's having stated his antitheses as he does.

In the first place, Gregory here structures his argument in accordance with the rules of discourse that he lays down earlier in the book—"All argument must proceed from plain and universally acknowledged premises in order to compel belief about matters in dispute".¹¹ Thus Gregory posits the division of existing things into the sensible and the intelligible as a self-evident axiom that is both a primary datum of ordinary experience and a truth guaranteed by the clear witness of St. Paul. Although the intellectual historian may regard the distinction of intelligibles from sensibles as a philosophical doctrine characteristic of Platonism, for Gregory it is simply a truth of common sense, one of the *koinai ennoiai* that all men, pagan or Christian, orthodox or heretic, can be presumed to share.¹² It is therefore not surprising if Plato and St. Paul agree on the point. The teaching about the uncreated, as Gregory here presents it, is not simply a truth of revelation with which he confronts and vanquishes the philosophical division of reality into intelligible and sensible. On the contrary, the distinction between mental and physical reality so readily apprehended on the basis, of our ordinary experience helps us to understand the more difficult teachings of scripture about the Creator.

The distinction between created and uncreated may be supreme from a strictly ontological perspective, but it is the difference between the sensible and the intelligible of which we first become aware.¹³ Gregory can therefore

10 See H. Cherniss, *The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa*, Berkeley 1930; according to Cherniss, Gregory never really did move beyond the Platonic dualism.

11 CE I 219 (GNO I, 90).

12 For this idea, see especially Gregory's essay *Ad Graecos Ex communibus notionibus* (GNO III/1, 19–33).

13 Cf. D.L. Balás, *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint*

properly call this latter division the first ("highest") without inconsistency. Gregory's argument recalls the Aristotelian distinction between what is clearer and more knowable in itself and what is the more readily apprehensible to us.¹⁴ We are led, as Gregory often points out, from the phenomenal, by means of the phenomenal, towards such knowledge of the supreme realities as is accessible to human grasp.¹⁵ Gregory accordingly here proceeds to show how reason leads step by step from sensible things to intelligibles and finally to plausible hypotheses about the divine nature itself. First, we apprehend things through the faculties of sense and learn to distinguish among physical objects by their qualities of color, size, shape, and so forth. Then, by subtracting all notions of sensible quality, we are led to infer the existence of incorporeal, intelligible beings. Next, by the analogy of the first division between the intelligible and the sensible, reason leads us, Gregory says, but without really explaining the logic of the case, to distinguish among intelligibles between that which is fully independent and causal, and that which is dependent and caused. Finally, still proceeding by analogy, since we make distinctions about greater and less with respect to sensible things on the basis of their bodily qualities, reason leads to ask how we may make similar distinctions among incorporeal beings.

The criterion that Gregory now introduces to distinguish among intelligible things is of an entirely different order from that which he applies to the sensibles. According to Gregory, sensibles can be differentiated on the basis of the objective qualities that they present to the mind. Intelligibles, however, are not differentiated by reference to anything inherent in their nature, but solely by the degree of their own free tendency towards the good. In other words, sensibles are objects wholly determined by their qualities, while intelligibles are free, conscious beings who determine for themselves what qualities they will present.

This fundamental difference between the intellectual and the sensible natures reveals a second and far more interesting reason for Gregory's having presented the crucial distinction between the created and the uncreated as if it were a subdivision of a prior distinction, between intelligibles and sensibles. The same criterion that distinguishes among intelligibles also differentiates all intellectual being, including the divine, from sensibles. The intellectual nature is free. The sensible nature is not. Within the intellectual nature, the divine is free absolutely, inasmuch as it possesses the good that it wills, while the created

Gregory of Nyssa, Rome 1966, 44, who notes that Gregory is here following the "logical order," but does not develop the point.

14 Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* 1, 184a.

15 See, for example, *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 14–17); *Eccl* 1 (GNO V, 284); *Cant* XI (GNO VI, 322).

is forever separated from its object, as liable to widen the gap between will and possession by the exercise of its freedom as to close it.

Thus there are three orders of reality that can be distinguished from one another by the criterion of freedom. But Gregory does not present us with a hierarchical classification of the three modes of being, with the self-sufficiency of God on top, physical determinism on the bottom, and the contingent freedom of created spirit in the middle. For the entire intellectual nature (including the divine) is as distinct from the sensible as is the entire created nature (including the intellectual) from the uncreated. This structure cannot adequately be represented either by a hierarchical ordering of existing things or by a dualism that sets beings on one side or another of a single line of division. What Gregory gives us, therefore, is a double antithesis between the sensible and the intelligible, the created and the uncreated. The two antitheses have overlapping terms. That is, the created nature includes some, but not all intelligibles, while the intellectual nature includes some, but not all created beings. The uncreated nature shares some of the characteristics of the created, namely the intellectual, while the sensible nature shares some, of the characteristics of the intellectual, namely createdness. The two antitheses cannot be generated from one another, nor can the one be reduced to the other. That is, the intellectual nature cannot be equated with the uncreated, nor can sensation be regarded as the distinctive mark of the created. Neither antithesis is complete without the other. Existing things must be defined by reference to both sets of poles.

This structure is unproblematic for the definition of the divine and of sensibles. Each is completely excluded by the other. The sensible is defined by opposition to both the uncreated and the intellectual natures, which are in turn analogous to one another. The divine is the opposite both of the created nature as a whole and of sensibles; and again, since all sensible nature is created, the two are analogous. There is a problem, however, with the definition of the created, intellectual nature. Created spirit is the opposite both of sensibles and of the uncreated, but the uncreated nature and the sensible nature are in no way analogous to each other. Thus the nature of created spirit can be understood only as the opposite of both of the other terms, which are themselves opposites. since the created intellectual nature is the opposite of the uncreated, and since the uncreated is the opposite of the sensible nature, created spirit must somehow be analogous to sensibles. Yet the created intellectual nature is also the opposite of sensibles and must therefore somehow be analogous to the divine. To put the matter in terms of the criterion of freedom, the created intellectual nature is both free and unfree.

We may illustrate the logical relations in tabular form as follows.

	Uncreated	Created	Intellectual	Sensible
Uncreated	Yes	No	Yes	No
Created	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intellectual	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sensible	No	Yes	No	Yes

These relationships represent a well understood structure in formal logic, although Gregory would perhaps not have recognized that fact. The uncreated and the created, the intellectual and the sensible are two pairs of contradictories. The uncreated is related to the intellectual by super implication, as is the sensible to the created. The uncreated and the sensible are contraries, while the intellectual and the created are subcontraries. This kind of structure results in an apparent paradox, however, for one who argues, as Gregory so often does, antithetically, by analogy and opposition. By the rules of antithetical argument, if two things are analogous, so also are their opposites; and similarly if two things are opposite, their opposites must also be opposed. Contraries and subcontraries violate this law. For although the uncreated and the sensible, being contraries, are indeed opposites that mutually exclude one another, the same cannot be said of their opposites, the intellectual and the created, which are subcontraries.

The difficulties that the different kinds of logical opposition can present for antithetical argument are well illustrated in the paradox that Gregory generates at the end of the first book *Contra Eunomium* to demonstrate the futility of trying to define the essence of the Godhead. After chastising Eunomius for admitting Unbeginning to the essence of God while excluding Unending, Gregory claims that even if both terms are admitted, the result will be absurd. For beginning and end are opposites, Gregory says;¹⁶ and it is always the case that things that are opposed (*enantia*) to opposites (*antikeimena*) are opposed (*enantia*) to each other. Therefore what is without beginning is opposite to what is without ending; and to include both in the essence of the Godhead will be to make the divine a synthesis of contraries, which is absurd. Accordingly one should concede not only that Ungeneracy is not the essence of God, but also that the essence of God is beyond any attempt at definition.

16 CE I 677 (GNO I, 221).

Gregory is being purposely playful here, as he warns the reader from the outset.¹⁷ In fact, the paradox in this argument arises not so much from confusion among contradictories, contraries, and subcontraries as from the fact that beginning and end are merely lexical antonyms and not logical contradictories at all. But the passage does illustrate the relentlessness of antithetical argument in insisting on the principle that the opposites of opposites are opposite, regardless of the nature of the opposition. By making the uncreated nature a subdivision of the intellectual, instead of the intellectual a subdivision of the created, Gregory sets up a logical tension that violates both antithetical and hierarchical reasoning, but that in fact provides a far more useful model than either for structuring reality.

II The Two Antitheses in Gregory's Earlier Works

Both of these antitheses appear in his earlier works, but it was the debate with Eunomius that led Gregory to bring them into conjunction for the first time. Before we examine the way that Gregory develops these antitheses in the books *Contra Eunomium*, it will be useful to review their place in Gregory's earlier works and to see how and why his perspective on the nature of reality begins to change. In particular, we want to see how Gregory moves from a traditional dualism in which the Platonic distinction between intelligibles and sensibles divides reality along lines parallel to the differentiation of the Creator from the creation to a more complex view that sees these two distinctions as quite different, yet overlapping, polarities. Just as he presents his divisions of reality in the order that reason reveals them, so in his own intellectual development Gregory begins from an epistemological distinction between the intelligible and the sensible and only later realizes that an equally sharp distinction must be made within the intelligible nature itself.

We may consider as a group the essays *De virginitate*, *De perfectione*, and *De mortuis oratio*, the homilies *De beatitudinibus*, and the treatise *In inscriptiones Psalmorum*. These are Gregory's earliest works, written probably in the order listed, but roughly contemporaneously with each other, during the four or five years before Basil's death in 379.¹⁸ In all of these works a dualism between

¹⁷ CE I 673–676 (GNO I, 220).

¹⁸ On the chronology of Gregory's works see the studies cited in note 2 above and J. Daniélou, "La chronologie des sermons de Grégoire de Nysse", *Revue des sciences religieuses* 29 (1955) 346 ff.; Id., "La chronologie des oeuvres de Grégoire de Nysse", *Studia Patristica* 7 (1966) 159–169; G. May, "Die Chronologie des Lebens und Werke des Gregor von Nyssa", in: M. Harl

intelligibles and sensibles predominates. Gregory does of course distinguish between the Creator and the creation; but he does not make a metaphysical principle of that distinction, and he tends rather to emphasize the kinship between the Creator and the intellectual nature than their distance. God and the human soul are related as archetype to image;¹⁹ and the perfection of life can be defined as assimilation to the divine.²⁰ Imitation of the archetypal beauty is achieved on the principle of like to like²¹ by separation from all attachment to the senses.²² Gregory characterizes this process of self-purification as a kind of spatial translation from the lower world to the upper;²³ the purified soul rises by its natural kinship with the intellectual nature of the divine.²⁴

The gulf between the intelligible and the sensible is much greater in these works than any difference between the now purified, intellectual soul and the divine nature. There is a wall of separation between mind and sense,²⁵ but not necessarily between the archetypal beauty of God and its image in man. Most significantly, in these earlier works, Gregory uses the same word—*diastêma*—to characterize the limitations of the sensible world that he will later apply to the created nature as a whole.²⁶ Sensibles are separated from the intellectual nature by the *diastêma*, and there is no such separation within the intellectual nature itself. In the homilies *De beatitudinibus*, for example, Gregory emphasizes the bounded kinship of all that is sensible.²⁷ However exalted a thing

(ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la Pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevotogne*, Leiden 1971, 51–67. E. Mühlberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, Göttingen 1966, dates the *De perfectione* to the earlier period of Gregory's literary activity rather than, with Daniélou, to the later; both May and Canévet have accepted this earlier dating.

19 Cf. *Virg* (GNO VIII/1, 296); *Perf* (GNO VIII/1, 195–196).

20 Cf. *Inscr* I 5 (GNO V, 40); *Beat* I (GNO VII/2, 81–83).

21 Cf. *Virg* (GNO VIII/1, 296).

22 Cf. *Inscr* I 4 (GNO V, 35).

23 Cf. *Beat* II (GNO VII/2, 90–92).

24 Cf. *Virg* (GNO VIII/1, 280).

25 Cf. *Perf* (GNO VIII/1, 184); *Beat* VII (GNO VII/2, 159–160); *Mort* (GNO IX, 43).

26 For the significance of *diastêma* as the mark of the creature, see especially H.U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée: Essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1942; P. Zemp, *Die Grundlagen heilsgeschichtlichen Denkens bei Gregor von Nyssa*, München 1970, 63–72; and T.P. Verghese, “Διάστημα and διάστασις in Gregory of Nyssa. Introduction to a Concept and the Posing of a Problem”, in: H. Dörrie—M. Altenburger—U. Schramm, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites Internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Leiden 1976, 243–277.

27 Cf. *Beat* II (GNO VII/2, 89–92).

may appear in spatial extension (*diastêma*), it nevertheless remains below that intellectual essence which the rational faculty can reach only by passing through and beyond all that is accessible to sense. Conversely, just as all sensibles are akin, so too is all the intellectual nature. In *De virginitate*, Gregory says that there is no interval, no *diastêma*, between virginity and the presence (*parousia*) of God.²⁸ Similarly, in the essay *In inscriptiones Psalmorum*, he says that the main purpose of the psalmist is to teach us how to distinguish between two orders of reality, the deceptive world of the senses and the permanent nature that sensation cannot reach.²⁹ Using a favorite pun on the word *theos*, Gregory claims that whoever learns the lesson of the psalms becomes, like God, an overseer of reality; and Gregory explicitly states that such a person becomes assimilated (*sumphuetai*) to the divine.³⁰

Although the antitheses of these works are not identical, they are congruent. That is, intelligible objects, intelligent beings, the human soul all stand on one side of the dividing line together with the divine nature, while on the other side are to be found their polar opposites in bodily passions and sensation. On either side of the division, things can be defined both by analogy with each other and by negation of all that stands on the opposite side. There is no double antithesis with overlapping terms to complicate matters. At the same time, however, Gregory contrasts the freedom of the intellectual soul with its enslavement to the world of sense in a way that both reinforces the antithesis of intelligibles and sensibles, yet also shows the inadequacy of too simple a dualism. The distinguishing mark of the intellectual nature is its freedom, and its subjection to physical necessity is a violation of the divine image.³¹ Gregory contrasts the unmastered blessedness of the divine image as originally constructed with its present service to an uncountable number of tyrants.³² He sets freedom on the side of kinship with God and aligns slavery with the bodily passions.³³

These contrasts between freedom and bondage seem perfectly consistent with a sharp dualism between the intellectual and the sensible, but Gregory introduces an entirely different perspective when addressing the question of how the intellectual nature came to lose its freedom. He emphasizes that the enslavement of the divine image itself results from an act of freedom. Evil

28 Cf. *Virg* (GNO VIII/1, 309).

29 Cf. *Inscr* I 4–6 (GNO V, 35–43).

30 Cf. *Inscr* I 6 (GNO V, 43,9).

31 Cf. *Virg* (GNO VIII/1, 272–273).

32 Cf. *Beat* III (GNO VII/2 104–107).

33 Cf. *Mort* (GNO IX, 43); *Inscr* II 12 (GNO V, 128).

has no substance apart from *prohaeresis*.³⁴ His very property of self-motion led man to become the demiurge of evil.³⁵ The soul freely permitted itself to become connatural with the sensible, instead of with the divine, so that the adversary found him easy to enslave.³⁶ The sensible nature is not in itself the cause of this enslavement. Although life in a mortal body is an estrangement from the intellectual image of God, it is also a providential instrument for the preservation of human freedom.³⁷ The enslavement of the intellectual soul does not result from its contact with the sensible; on the contrary, the synthesis of body and soul is both result and compensation for some fragility inherent in the intellectual nature itself.

III The Transitional Period

In his, earliest works, then, Gregory formally divides Being into the intelligible and the sensible, with no further subdivision of the intellectual nature into the created and the uncreated. The definition of the intellectual nature as free, however, leads to a problem that a simple dualism cannot address. The self-enslavement of the intellectual nature of the soul can be accounted for only by positing an essential difference between the absolute sovereignty of the creator, which produces only the good, and the fragile freedom of the creature, which can also become the demiurge of evil. Gregory explores this problem in a series of works written during the period of approximately eighteen months between the death of Basil and the composition of the first book *Contra Eunomium*, where he introduces a formal distinction between the created and the uncreated for the first time.

This transitional stage in Gregory's thinking is well represented by a comparison of the two works *Apologia in Hexaemeron* and *De hominis opificio*. Gregory wrote the *De hominis opificio* as a memorial to Basil and an Easter gift for his brother Peter.³⁸ The *Apologia in Hexaemeron*, written to complete and defend the *Hexaemeron* of Basil,³⁹ seems to have been composed shortly after Basil's death in 379; and it presupposes the work *De hominis opificio* to which Gregory

34 Cf. *Beat* V (GNO VII/2, 129–130).

35 Cf. *Virg* (GNO VIII/1 297–298).

36 Cf. *Beat* VIII (GNO VII/2, 166–167).

37 Cf. *Mort* (GNO IX, 56).

38 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 126).

39 Cf. *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 5–6).

apparently refers at the end of the essay.⁴⁰ Yet the *Hex* reflects a perspective on reality that is of a piece with the earlier works, while the *Op hom* represents a significant step towards a double division of being better able to accommodate the problem of created freedom. The *Hex* differentiates sharply between the sensible and the intelligible as the supreme division of reality, with no further subdivision of created and uncreated.⁴¹ The “waters” of the *stereôma* separate the two natures,⁴² and, as in the *De beatitudinibus*, the sensible order is said to be characterized by *diastêma*, while there are no such intervals of separation within the intelligible nature.⁴³ In the *Op hom*, on the other hand, Gregory shows little interest in the difference between intelligibles and sensibles as objects, but rather speculates on the nature, self-consciousness, and freedom of the sentient subject. In a long passage⁴⁴ that both anticipates Augustine and is reminiscent of Heraclitus,⁴⁵ Gregory reflects on the intellectual nature, not as a separate order of reality opposed to the sensible, but as mind, an amazing receptacle and organizer of the senses, which defies all definition. No one can know his own mind; it is as incomprehensible as its divine archetype. Instead of intelligibles and sensibles, Gregory now contrasts the nature that is rational and free with what is irrational and governed by outside forces.⁴⁶ There are two extremes among existing things—the incorporeal and divine versus the irrational and the brutish. Man is in the middle, and it is possible to contemplate in him a share of each nature.⁴⁷ As the image of God, man is not yoked to any physical necessity; he is sovereign and lordless, with a self-governing will.⁴⁸ But the sovereign will of God and the freedom of man are differentiated as the uncreated nature from the created. The uncreated nature is characterized by a freedom so absolutely unopposed that it can create being from non-being. The created nature, on the other hand, has a freedom that is always in motion and is

40 Cf. *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 84–85). So Daniélou, followed by most others; E. Corsini, “Plérôme humaine et plérôme cosmique chez Grégoire de Nysse”, in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la Pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevotogne*, Leiden 1971, 111–126, would place both books a year or two later on the basis of the more advanced understanding of man as mediator that he believes can have been written only after the first book *Contra Eunomium*.

41 Cf. *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 14–17).

42 Cf. *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 30–33).

43 Cf. *Hex* (GNO IV/1, 33–35).

44 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 149–160).

45 Cf. *Heraclitus*, *Fr.* 45 (DK 2, 22).

46 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 132–135).

47 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 181).

48 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 184).

paradoxically capable of producing non-being from being, by bringing evil into a kind of parasitical subsistence that is both dependent on the created will and yet enslaves it.⁴⁹

The *Op hom* represents the transitional stage in Gregory's thinking. He introduces the ontological distinction of the created from the uncreated for the first time, and he does so in order to account for the fragility of created freedom. But he continues to associate the *diastêma* with matter,⁵⁰ rather than with the created nature as a whole. The *De anima et resurrectione*, written about a year later and purporting to be a record of Gregory's last conversation with his sister Macrina, reflects virtually identical views on these themes. The human mind is closely related to God, as image to archetype, Gregory says, but differentiated by its createdness.⁵¹ Gregory does not here define that differentiation, but rather continues to emphasize the kinship of mind with the divine nature in that both are beyond all *diastêma*.

The most striking development in Gregory's thought, apart from the books *Contra Eunomium* themselves, is reflected in the homilies *De oratione dominica* and *In Ecclesiasten*. In the *In Ecclesiasten homiliae* we meet a formal differentiation of the created from the uncreated that goes beyond that of the *Op hom*. Gregory divides existing things into the intelligible and the sensible, the incorporeal and the hylic;⁵² and he describes the two poles of reality in much the same terms as in the earlier works. A few pages later,⁵³ however, Gregory presents what he calls a greater philosophy in language that anticipates the first book *Contra Eunomium*. Existing things, Gregory says, can remain in being only by the power of that which truly exists. This truly existent (*to ontôs on*) is the self-good, or whatever may be of loftier conception, for it is beyond name. The only proper conception of the really real is that the divine is beyond knowledge.⁵⁴ For all creation is akin to itself and remains within its own bounds. More precisely, he continues,⁵⁵ the creation is *diastêma* and our mental faculties are constrained to move within the *diastêma*, while the good that we seek is beyond *diastêma*, above creation and above mental prying.

The *De oratione dominica* is a work difficult to place chronologically. There is much in the way that Gregory describes the imitation of God as a flight from

49 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 193–201).

50 Cf. *Op hom* (PG 44, 209).

51 Cf. *An et res* (GNO III/3, 25–27).

52 Cf. *Eccl VI* (GNO V, 374).

53 Cf. *Eccl VII* (GNO V, 406).

54 Cf. *Eccl VII* (GNO V, 411).

55 Cf. *Eccl VII* (GNO V, 412).

everything sensible⁵⁶ that is reminiscent of *De virginitate* and connects these homilies with Gregory's earlier works, but there is also much that reflects the same kind of development evident in the *De hominis opificio* and *In Ecclesiasten homiliae*. Gregory divides the rational nature between the bodily and the incorporeal; and he speculates that the mixture in man of the rational with the bodily is an arrangement of the divine will to assure that each nature will have a share of the other.⁵⁷ One passage in particular is so strikingly similar to language found in the homilies *In Ecclesiasten* as to suggest a close chronological relationship. Both works use the same image of the serpent whose tail necessarily follows its head to entwine its victim in evil.⁵⁸ As in the homilies *In Ecclesiasten* Gregory offers a "new philosophy" about the uncreated nature, so in this work he presents the reader with what he calls a personal opinion about the nature of things.⁵⁹ There is one true power and authority over all. This power is absolute, but it does not govern by violence and tyrannical force so as enslave its subjects in abject fear. For virtue must be its own master (*adespoton*), free from all fear, choosing the good by a willing decision. The chief and sum of all good is to be subject to the life-giving power. Mankind was deceived in its choice of the good and became subject instead to the tyranny of sin and death. The prayer for the coming of the kingdom is accordingly a prayer to be released from involuntary servitude to a tyrannical power so that one may once again have the freedom to choose a voluntary subjection to the good. Gregory does not here formally divide reality between the Creator and the created, but such a distinction is implicit in the contrast between the absolute will of God, which is so powerful that it has no need of governing by force, and the contingent will of the creature, easily deceived into slavery.

In these transitional works, then, we see Gregory moving away from a simple dualism and emphasizing the differentiation of the intellectual nature of the soul from the Creator as well as from sensibles. It is primarily the internal logic of Gregory's thought, as he becomes increasingly aware of the need to account for the perverse motions of created freedom, rather than the demands of polemical debate, that motivates this development. His ideas remain disconnected, however. Gregory sees the distinction between intelligibles and sensibles sometimes in epistemological terms, sometimes as a moral differentiation; and he tends to confuse the two perspectives. He has not yet brought his two ways of dividing reality into relationship with each other so as to make a double

56 Cf. *Or dom* II–IV (GNO VII/2, 27–45).

57 Cf. *Or dom* IV (GNO VII/2, 48–49).

58 Cf. *Or dom* IV (GNO VII/2, 53–54); *Ecccl* IV (GNO V, 348–350).

59 Cf. *Or dom* III (GNO VII/2, 36–38).

antithesis between intelligibles and sensibles, the created and the uncreated. Furthermore, he defines the difference between the Creator and the creation in different ways, according to the context, without showing how the criterion of freedom emphasized in the *De hominis opificio* and the *Oratio dominica* relates to the concept of *diastêma* introduced in the homilies *In Ecclesiasten*.

IV The Debate with Eunomius

The debate with Eunomius proved to be the catalyst that led Gregory to develop a more comprehensive point of view from which he could begin to unite and systematize his changing ideas. In the first book *Contra Eunomium*, he brings his two ways of dividing reality together into a single formal statement for the first time, emphasizing the criterion of freedom. In the second book, he develops the notion of the *diastêma* as the distinguishing mark of the creature. In the third book, he brings the two ideas together, so that the *diastêma* becomes the defining mark of the difference between created and uncreated freedom.⁶⁰ Finally, in his later works, Gregory redefines the double antithesis of intelligibles and sensibles, created and uncreated, in such a way as to show the relationship between the essential freedom of the created intellectual nature that differentiates it from sensibles and the limitations of the *diastêma* that bind the two orders together.

In the *Contra Eunomium* I, Gregory combines his two ways of dividing reality, using the criterion of freedom to distinguish within the intellectual nature between the created and the uncreated as well as to separate the intellectual nature as a whole from the sensible. The proper distinction between the divine autonomy and the relative freedom of created spirit is a prominent element of Gregory's argument throughout the book. His formal discussion of the nature of reality follows immediately upon a passage where Gregory objects that Eunomius's three levels of being within the godhead subject the deity to some kind of governing necessity, although even the simplest of believers knows there is no necessity above the divine nature to bend the Only-Begotten like a bought slave to its will.⁶¹ Later, Gregory reminds Eunomius that the Son is the Lord of Creation.⁶² If we also make him kindred to creation, as Eunomius does, then the rest of the created order will complain of being subject to Him;

60 On the chronology of the books *Contra Eunomium* see the studies cited in note 18, above, and W. Jaeger's discussion in the prolegomena to his edition, GNO II.

61 Cf. CE I 256 (GNO I, 101).

62 Cf. CE I 524–529 (GNO I, 178–179).

for those of equal status will demand and deserve an equal share in the government. Any compromise in the absolute freedom of the divinity will destroy the polar opposition of the created and the uncreated.

In the *Contra Eunomium* II, Gregory emphasizes the uncrossable gap between the created and the uncreated,⁶³ but he defines that difference by reference to the *diastêma* that characterizes the creation rather than by the criterion of freedom. Gregory is here dealing with the nature of language and thought against Eunomius's contention that ungeneracy is the very name of the highest God's own essence. Be therefore sees the distinction between the created and the uncreated in epistemological, rather than moral terms. The boundless and incomprehensible nature of the uncreated he contrasts with the objects of intelligence, rather than with created intelligence itself. Thus Abraham's journey is an allegory of the voyage of the soul away from its kinship with the senses and towards the realm of the invisible so as to contemplate as much of the divine nature as is accessible to finite human capacity.⁶⁴ When Gregory divides reality into the sensible and the intelligible,⁶⁵ he does so without further subdividing the intelligible into the created and the uncreated.

This difference between the two books reflects two quite different perspectives on the nature of things, which Gregory has not yet brought into a clear relationship. From the epistemological perspective, which is Gregory's concern in the second book, the double antithesis is neither necessary nor appropriate. Indeed, one aspect of the difference between the created and the uncreated is that the epistemological hierarchy is restricted entirely to the created order. Thus, epistemologically, intelligibles and sensibles are a subdivision of the created order in a perfectly straightforward hierarchy. But the moral perspective requires the more paradoxical structure that violates the epistemological hierarchy by making the uncreated nature a subdivision of the intelligible. In the *Contra Eunomium* II, the *diastêma* is primarily an epistemological limitation.

In the *Contra Eunomium* III, Gregory begins to unite these two perspectives in a more comprehensive view that shows how the *diastêma* that limits the created order as a whole also defines the difference within the intellectual nature between the absolute will of the Creator and the contingent freedom of the creature. There can be no community of names between the created and the uncreated, because the characteristics contemplated in these names are oppo-

63 Cf. CE II 69 (GNO I, 246).

64 Cf. CE II 84–89 (GNO I, 252 ff.).

65 Cf. CE II 572 (GNO I, 393).

site. In particular, as St. Paul clearly attests, the Only-Begotten Creator is Lord, while the creation is in servitude.⁶⁶ But neither the Only-Begotten nor His created image is absolutely enslaved to any necessity. Their difference lies in the character of their freedom. The lower nature is in the middle of good and evil, moving itself by an act of *prohaeresis* so as to become either a child of God or a son of perdition, as scripture says.⁶⁷ The Only-Begotten is not subject to such impulses of *prohaeresis*. He is the one, simple and unchanging good, who wills what he is and is what he wills, so as to be called Son of God in the full and proper sense.⁶⁸ Thus both categories of the intellectual nature are free but there is a difference between the absolute will of the uncreated nature, which knows no separation from its object, and the contingent freedom of the creature who, can never be fully in possession of the good. This difference Gregory now characterizes as a consequence of the *diastêma* that defines the created order. The Father did not produce the Son under any constraint of natural necessity, Gregory says, but by an act of will that results in no interval (*diastêma*) between them; for it is a property only of the created nature that will and possession do not coincide.⁶⁹

Gregory concludes the third book by showing how central to the Gospel message this difference is between the absolute freedom of the Creator and the limitations of the creature within the *diastêma*. Because of the interval that separates him from the good he desires, the creature allowed himself to be enslaved to an alien power. It was to restore freedom of movement towards the good that the Only-Begotten took upon himself the human nature. By making the Son a slave to necessity, Eunomius has destroyed the Gospel; for a slave cannot bestow freedom on his fellows.⁷⁰ Gregory emphasizes that the Good Shepherd assumed the human slavery by a free act of philanthropy and not under any necessity inherent in His nature. Christ is not like a stone that falls or a flame that rises by physical necessity, nor is He an intermediate nature like those of Egyptian myth. For grace is not grace if effected under any compulsion.⁷¹ The *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* reiterates many of the same arguments, verbatim in some cases; but Gregory adds one important new point. It is precisely because the divine nature is unchangeable that it requires no gov-

66 Cf. CE III/1 11–20 (GNO II, 1–10).

67 Cf. CE III/1 116–125 (GNO II, 43–45).

68 Cf. CE III/1 125 (GNO II, 46).

69 Cf. CE III/4 15–16 (GNO II, 191).

70 Cf. CE III/8 41; (GNO II, 254); CE III/9 48–49 (GNO II, 282).

71 Cf. CE III/10 29–41 (GNO II, 301–305).

erning power over itself.⁷² Gregory elsewhere defines the difference between the created and the uncreated by the fact of change;⁷³ and it is significant that although freedom would seem to entail the possibility of change, Gregory sees change itself as a limitation on freedom.

v The Double Antithesis in Gregory's Mature Works

In the course of the debate with Eunomius, Gregory has developed freedom as an ontological criterion for distinguishing among beings, a criterion under which he is able to subsume all the characteristics that separate the creature from the Creator, including the *diastêma* and the fact of change itself. This same criterion also serves to define the analogies between the two natures, so that created spirit can be understood as a being that stands on the borderline of freedom and servitude. Quite apart from its function in the trinitarian controversy, the double antithesis of intelligibles and sensibles, created and uncreated, now serves Gregory as a far better model for understanding the paradoxical situation of man in the world than the dualism that dominates his earlier works.

The results of Gregory's new emphasis on freedom as a criterion of definition are well illustrated in the *Oratio catechetica magna*, written sometime after 383.⁷⁴ Here Gregory defines man as a being created in two images, that of the self-sufficient freedom of God on the one hand, the irrationality of the beasts on the other. The Creator fashioned man of an appropriate nature to achieve his mission—the union of the intelligible with the sensible—by making him in His own image. Thus He bestowed upon man the greatest of the divine attributes—unmastered, self-governing authority. Yet because the Creator foresaw the abuse of this gift, he clothed His image in the same garments of skin that cloak the irrational nature. By this device, God so arranged matters that man's plunge into non-being and evil should not be permanent, since the distorted image would be dissolved in death so as to be recreated in the resurrection.⁷⁵

⁷² Cf. *Ref Eun* 128 (GNO II, 367).

⁷³ E.g., *Op hom* (PG 44, 184).

⁷⁴ On the date see G. May, "Die Chronologie des Lebens und Werke des Gregor von Nyssa", in: M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la Pensée de Grégoire de Nysse. Actes du colloque de Chevotogne*, Leiden 1971, 51–67. Gregory refers (GNO III/4, 98) the reader who desires more detailed argument on certain points to his polemical works, presumably the books *Contra Eunomium*.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Or cat* VI–VIII (GNO III/4, 21–30).

We cannot here discuss the many difficulties involved in Gregory's notion of the "garments of skin".⁷⁶ What is significant for the present argument is the association of these garments of skin with death and with the irrational nature, and of the irrational nature with the absence of autonomy. Death is the ultimate denial of freedom and thus more properly associated with the irrational nature of the beasts than with the intellectual nature of the divine image. It is a property of the irrational nature, Gregory says, to be dragged about by a foreign will.⁷⁷ Without autonomy, there is no rationality, without choice no virtue, without freedom no divine image. Yet even while cloaked in the irrational garments of skin, man remains free. Indeed, the garments of skin and death itself are instruments for the preservation of human freedom. Gregory sets man in a peculiar position here. He is created in the image of God and therefore free, immortal, and rational. Yet because of the fragility of created freedom he is also clothed in the garments of skin and therefore akin to the irrational, the mortal, and the unfree. Whatever may be the difficulties of explicating Gregory's teachings about the dual nature of man, it is the paradox itself that is important, the same paradox that is inherent in Gregory's double division of being. Man is both analogous and contrary to two natures that are themselves opposites. Man is neither God nor beast by nature, but can assimilate himself to one pole or another by the sovereign exercise of his freedom.

Other works of this period similarly reflect Gregory's interest in the peculiar status of man astride the divisions of being.⁷⁸ But it is in the *In Canticum canticorum* that Gregory gives us what is at once his most precise and most poetic statement. Here he combines the double division of being developed in the books *Contra Eunomium* with the paradoxical definition of man set for-

76 On the garments of skin, see especially J. Daniélou, *L'Etre et le Temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1970, 154–185.

77 Cf. *Or cat xxx* (GNO III/4, 75–76).

78 The commentary on *De vita Moysis*, which may be roughly contemporaneous with the *Oratio catechetica magna*, similarly emphasizes that "we become our own fathers" (GNO VII/1, 34); and Gregory contrasts the freedom that Moses achieves in the friendship of God with the cyclical necessities of ordinary life (GNO VII/1, 60). R. Heine, *Perfection in the Virtuous Life*, Cambridge 1975, has challenged Daniélou's late dating of the work; May and Canévet agree that Daniélou's arguments are not conclusive, but both still regard the work as being thematically among Gregory's most mature. The essay *De infantibus praemature abreptis* also reveals considerable interest in man's ambiguous status astride the divisions of being (GNO III/2, 76–79). In the *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*, Gregory argues that to deprive Christ of a human *nous* would be to deprive him of freedom and set him on a level with the beasts; he defines *nous* as being precisely the faculty of self-willed motion towards the good (GNO III/1, 177; 198–199).

ward in the *Oratio catechetica magna*. The work contains a formal definition of the nature of reality that provides the closest parallel, to that of the *Contra Eunomium* I and contains many verbal similarities.⁷⁹ Gregory divides existing things into the sensible and material on the one side, the intelligible and immaterial on the other. The intelligible is unbounded and illimited (*apeiron*, *aoriston*), while the material is contained entirely within the limits of the sensible qualities. This boundlessness applies to the intelligible nature as a whole. Gregory then proceeds to subdivide the intellectual nature into the uncreated and the created. As in the *Contra Eunomium* I, he defines the uncreated nature as being always the same, beyond any distinctions of greater or less as to possession of the good. That nature which is brought into being by creation, on the other hand, is never complete, but ever creating itself, by a process of perpetual increase in the good to which there can be no limit.

What this passage adds to the statement given in the *Contra Eunomium* I is the more precise definition of the *diastêma* as the property of created freedom that Gregory had begun to develop in the third book. As in his earliest works Gregory continues to describe the intellectual nature as unlimited and, therefore, free. But the created intellectual nature now shares the *diastêma* with sensibles. The uncreated is absolutely free, since there is no interval between its will and its goal. Created spirit may approach its goal without limit, but however great its progress, the interval between will and possession remains undiminished. The double antithesis of the created and the uncreated, intelligibles and sensibles, serves as a structural model for differentiating being in accordance with two kinds of limit. The intellectual nature escapes the boundaries that limit the sensible; while the uncreated nature flees the limits of the *diastêma* that bind the intellectual to the sensible. In other words, the distinction between intelligibles and sensibles corresponds to the differentiation of the indefinite from the definite, while within the indefinite a further distinction must be made between the infinite and the finite. Created spirit is finite, but not defined, free but not unbounded.

In less technical language, throughout the *In Canticum canticorum*, Gregory portrays human life as we know it as being in a liminal state between the divine and the beastly, life and death, between the true freedom of the divine image and the enslavement of self-worship. Human nature is receptive of whatever the *prohaeresis* embraces.⁸⁰ Once man had eaten of the mixed fruit of good and evil he exchanged the divine life of the free image for that which is irrational

79 Cf. *Cant* VI (GNO VI, 174–175).

80 Cf. *Cant* IV (GNO VI, 102).

and beastly. Thus death entered into the whole human succession; and we now stand in the middle of two lives.⁸¹ Gregory uses a particularly striking image of man as having been “frozen” in the icy winter of idolatry.⁸² What was intended to be mobile, ever increasing in participation of the good, turned instead to the frozen nature of what it falsely worshipped. Thus human nature became immobile, stone instead of man, unable to move towards the good. That is why the sun of righteousness has risen to thaw frozen humanity and permit it once again to become a living water welling up to eternal life. Man lives in a *methorios* season between winter’s sorrow and the fullness of summer’s fruits.⁸³

VI The Double Antithesis and the Hellenic Tradition

In his most mature teaching, as we have it in the homilies *In Canticum canticorum*, Gregory uses the double antithesis developed in the context of the Eunomian debate to give formal expression to the paradoxical status of created spirit as a category that defies definition precisely because it is both free and bounded. This double antithesis functions in a thoroughly Christian environment, but the understanding of reality that motivates it is strikingly similar to the categories of a much earlier period in Greek thought. In the very process of moving beyond his earlier Platonic dualism, Gregory has made contact with the Greek intellectual tradition at a much more fundamental level.

There are two closely related issues here. Each of them requires a much fuller examination than can be attempted in this essay, but a few preliminary suggestions may be made to indicate the lines along which a more comprehensive study might proceed. The first issue concerns the movement evident in Gregory’s development away from an earlier tendency that he shares with Platonism to assimilate the intellectual nature of the soul with the divine and towards a more specifically Christian understanding of the radical separation of the creature from the Creator. Now the Christian understanding of the creation and, especially, creation *ex nihilo* are often interpreted as deriving from a Biblical world-view irreconcilably opposed to paganism.⁸⁴ Such a contrast doubtless points to a real difference between Biblical and Greek thought, inasmuch as the Greeks never conceived of the divine as being completely omnipotent and

81 Cf. *Cant* XII (GNO VI, 350).

82 Cf. *Cant* V (GNO VI, 147).

83 Cf. *Cant* V (GNO VI, 155).

84 See for example C. Tresmontant, *The Origins of Christian Philosophy*, New York 1963.

wholly separate from the cosmos. But a doctrine of creation from nothing is not to be found as such either in the Hebrew scriptures or in the New Testament. It takes a Platonist, or at least an apologist concerned with defending the distinctiveness of Christianity in comparison with Platonism, to define the Hebrew doctrine of creation and the Creator in the way that we have come to characterize as "Biblical." The Christian understanding of the Creator is accordingly not simply a datum of revelation that confronts and finally vanquishes an alien tradition, but a Biblical truth whose discovery is made possible only when the concerns of Greco-Roman culture are brought to bear on the interpretation of the Biblical text.⁸⁵

Gregory of Nyssa is an interesting case in point, recapitulating within the intellectual life of an individual the history of the dialogue between Christianity and Hellenism during the preceding two or three centuries. It is particularly noteworthy that the same terminology he once used to differentiate the sensible from the intelligible—*diastêma*—becomes in the later works the distinguishing characteristic of the created from the uncreated. It is by investigating the implications and the limitations of a philosophical distinction between intelligibles and sensibles that Gregory comes to discover a deeper meaning in the Biblical contrast of the Creator and the created than he had previously seen. That new understanding in turn leads him to redefine the distinction between intelligibles and sensibles as one that complements that between the Creator and the created so as to accommodate both the relationship and the contrast between God and His image. The notions of participation and imitation are themselves deeply indebted to Platonism and could never have been derived from the Biblical "image of God" in itself. It is true, as J. Daniélou, D. Balás, and others have shown, that these ideas have a completely different function in Gregory's thought than they do in Platonism. But to think of Gregory, or the early Christian tradition as a whole, as using a familiar vocabulary to express essentially Christian ideas, as bringing Greek philosophy into the service of the Gospel, or as effecting a transformation of Platonism by confronting it with the revealed truth of Christianity is not to tell the whole story. Christianity itself is defined in the process of this dialogue and interpenetration. In that, A. Harnack was right.⁸⁶ The result, however, is not a deformation or contami-

85 G. May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts*, Berlin 1978, has sought to show how and when the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* came to be developed in the context of the Gnostic debate. The whole question of the Christian understanding of creation in relation to Hellenic thought in the second and third centuries demands a complete reinterpretation.

86 A. von Harnack's celebrated remark, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* I, Tübingen⁵ 1931, 20,

nation of the primitive Gospel. On the contrary, the Gospel is opened up to a whole new range of meanings and enabled to speak in ways that it could not before. The Christian doctrine of creation and the new expression that Gregory gives to it both result from a mutual interplay of the Biblical and the Greek that constitutes neither synthesis nor compromise, but the construction of a new language in which the deepest meanings of both worlds are realized in an entirely different way.

This brings us to the second issue. If the radical distinction between the created and the uncreated can be seen as the discovery of Christian truth in the light of Hellenic concepts, the resultant understanding of created spirit as a liminal nature between two lives, free to form itself in either image, can be seen as the rediscovery in the light of Christian teachings of a fundamental Hellenic truth. For Gregory man is, like God, a being that by definition defies definition. He stands between life and death, good and evil, freedom and bondage, the divine and the beastly. Man cannot be set once and for all on either side of a single line that divides radically polar opposites. He can define himself by opposition and contrast to the beings on one side of the line or the other, now assimilated to one pole, now to the other, but he does not constitute an intermediate being that allows the one to merge into the another. Man is the being in whom opposites meet, not by harmonious blending, but in perpetual warfare. The victory of one is the destruction of the other, an image of which Gregory is particularly fond.

The antithetical structure of Gregory's thought itself recalls that of the earliest Greeks, who defined themselves and the world around them by polarity and analogy.⁸⁷ On one side of the line stands the immortal blessedness of the gods, at the opposite pole are the irrational beasts and, for that matter, women and barbarians as well. Man stands on the, boundary, precariously set between the irrationality of the beasts whose savagery always threatens to overwhelm him and the immortal blessedness of the gods whose self-sufficient freedom he ever emulates and is ever denied.⁸⁸ As for Gregory, so for the earlier Greeks, the thin line of division between the human and the bestial can be seen sometimes as a hard-won status of differentiation from the primordial forces of the wilderness, sometimes as a degradation from an originally more godlike nature. Sophocles'

that Christian dogma is "das Werk des griechischen Geistes auf dem Boden des Evangeliums," may be true in ways that Harnack never intended.

87 See G.E.R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, Cambridge 1966.

88 An excellent introduction to these polarities in early Greek literature may be found in Ch. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization*, Cambridge 1981.

famous "Ode to Man" in the *Antigone*, extolling the victories of human reason over primitivism, Gregory echoes in a striking passage of the sermon *Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt*.⁸⁹ For both authors, death remains resistant to human ingenuity; and for both the accomplishments of reason bestow a false sense of security and autonomy. From the other perspective, Hesiod's myth of the four ages depicting contemporary man as a race of iron, instead of silver or gold, has its counterpart in Gregory's theory of the increase of evil.⁹⁰ Aristotle's famous dictum is a classic statement both of the double polarity between god and man, man and beast and of man's attempt to mediate the opposition within the boundaries of the civilized polis—man is a political animal; whoever has no share in the polis must be either god or beast.⁹¹ Gregory, too, thinks of the polis as a special space within which men can realize the best in their nature; but for Gregory the boundaries are much broader than a herald's cry. Gregory's city incorporates all of mankind in a vision of the final consummation that is thoroughly Christian; but political language and metaphor permeate Gregory's works in a way that is much more thoroughly Greek than any Biblical image of the heavenly Jerusalem alone could inspire.

Even the "dietary code" that some commentators have described as an expression of the ancient Greek polarities of god and beast finds a place in Gregory's thought.⁹² For the ancients, ambrosia is the proper food for those who dwell in Olympian bliss, while the savage eats raw meat and cultivated cereals feed the citizens of the polis. The Eucharistic meal by which the community is fed so as to become the body of Christ⁹³ is a loose parallel, but there is a more archaic tone to the symbolism that Gregory uses in the *In Canticum canticorum*. Christ is the apple tree planted in the dark wood of the irrational beasts. His fruit delights all the senses of the soul,⁹⁴ and it is with these apples that the bride desires to be filled.⁹⁵ The Good Shepherd feeds his sheep with pure lilies. For mash is the fodder of the irrational nature; and whoever feeds on this mash

89 *Cast* (GNO X/2, 323–324).

90 On Gregory's theory of the increase and acme of evil see J. Daniélou, *L'Etre et le Temps*, 186–204.

91 Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1253a.

92 See, for example, Ch. Segal, "The Raw and the Cooked in Greek Literature: Structure, Values, Metaphor," *Classical Journal* 69 (1974) 289–308, and M. Detienne, *Les Jardins d'Adonis*, Paris 1972.

93 E.g. *Or Cat* XXXVII (GNO III/4, 93–97).

94 Cf. *Cant* IV (GNO VI, 116–119).

95 Cf. *Cant* IV (GNO VI, 124–127).

becomes what he eats.⁹⁶ So the Word nurtures the soul not with thorns or hay, but with the fragrant lilies of the heavenly city.⁹⁷

Thus, although Gregory's double antithesis entails a more complex view of things than the parallel antitheses of the archaic tradition, there is a structural similarity between the two ways of thought. There is also a marked similarity in content. Gregory's portrait of man as an ambiguous being defined by freedom but enslaved to hostile powers, suspended between autonomy and necessity, echoes a constant refrain of the earlier Greek tradition. Achilles' very perversity in his willingness both to defy the power of the king and to permit the whole Greek host to be slaughtered, rather than suffer any diminution of his own honor, is a fundamental assertion of human freedom. Yet, even as Achilles asserts his autonomy, it is the plan of Zeus that is thereby accomplished. This is not a benevolent and purposive Zeus who creates and sanctions human freedom, but a jealous and sometimes arbitrary power. Even Zeus cannot always have his own way. Paradoxically, only Fate herself is finally free. But if Gregory has a completely different understanding both of the source of freedom and the causes of its alienation, he nevertheless speaks more directly than he realizes to the dilemma of Homeric man, defined by his self-conscious freedom, but denied its exercise. For Sophocles, too, the tragic hero is a being on the borderline, liable by the very exercise of his freedom to meet the necessity he hopes to vanquish. This is the predicament of Oedipus. Aeschylus' picture of Prometheus, the bearer of the civilizing arts, pinned to the rock by force and might, but defiant to the end, speaks to the same issue. It is this tension between freedom and necessity that led the Orphics and, later, Plato to make the fateful division between soul and body, the intelligible and the sensible.⁹⁸ The characterization of the body as the "prison-house" of the soul leads to a depreciation of the sensible order that is, in the final analysis, incompatible with the Christian understanding of the creation.⁹⁹ But the metaphor itself points to the underlying antithesis between spiritual freedom and all that would stand in its way that is permanent in the tradition, however much its expressions may vary. For Plato, it is the moral and political enslavement of man in estrangement from

96 Cf. *Cant* v (GNO VI, 169).

97 Cf. *Cant* v (GNO VI, 171); *Cant* xv (GNO VI, 441–442).

98 On these issues in general, see W.C. Greene, *Moirai: Fate, Good, and Evil in Greek Thought*, Cambridge 1944.

99 Plato, *Cratylus* 400c; for an interesting discussion of what Plato may and may not have meant by this famous phrase see R. Ferwerda, "The Meaning of the Word *sôma* (Body) in the Axial Age: An Interpretation of Plato's *Cratylus* 400c", in: S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, Albany 1986, 111–124.

his true nature that is the lesson of the Parable of the Cave, not the distinction between intelligibles and sensible as such, whatever the afterlife of the theory of ideas. The issue was always at root a moral dilemma, not an epistemological problem; and it is to the moral paradox in human life that Christianity and Gregory of Nyssa return.

Late antique thought with its obsession for concept and system on the one hand, or fantastic mythology on the other, had lost contact with its own cultural roots. In the Christianity of Gregory of Nyssa the most ancient and most permanent concerns of the Greek mind surface and find new expression.¹⁰⁰ Even Gregory's most distinctively Christian teaching, the idea of infinite progress towards an infinite God, has its counterpart, at the deepest levels of meaning, in the earlier Greek tradition. E. Mühlenberg may well be right that Gregory's identification of the indefinite with real being and goodness contradicts the entire Greek philosophical tradition before him.¹⁰¹ But the Christian hero who dares to leave behind the comfort of familiar structures and boundaries in pursuit of the unknowable God has a fellow-traveler in the Sophoclean hero in whom boundaries are met and breached. However different in language and concept Christianity and Hellenism may be, there is an underlying structural identity that may go further toward explaining their conflict than any hypothesis of fundamental opposition.

In the debate with Eunomius, much more than the divinity of the Son is at stake. At the heart of the whole controversy is an understanding of the predicament of man in a seemingly hostile world, a *methorios* nature between polar opposites that can admit no intermediaries. Orthodox Christianity embraced the paradoxes that both Eunomius and Apollinarius sought to resolve. Only a Christianity that could speak to these polarities by preserving them would survive as a cultural force, and only in Christianity could the tensions of Greek thought now find a supple enough vehicle for expression. The double antithesis between the created and the uncreated, the sensible and the intelligible, makes sense of these paradoxes in a way that neither Neo-Platonism nor Eunomianism with their gradations of being could do. The differences between Christianity and Hellenism are not to be minimized. There is nothing in the earlier Greek tradition that corresponds to the uncreated nature of Gregory of Nyssa, certainly no analogue to the incarnation. But underneath the divergences of

100 Cf. W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, Cambridge 1961, 40, who speaks of a "rebirth of the *ideae innatae* of the Greek mind".

101 E. Mühlenberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa. Gregors Kritik am Gottesbegriff der klassischen Metaphysik*, Göttingen 1966; M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983.

language and concept lies a structural identity that may help to account for the fact that it was among the Greeks that Christianity as we know it took its shape.

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Divine Attributes and God's Unity in the *Contra Eunomium* I of Gregory of Nyssa

Miguel Brugarolas

As is widely known, Eunomius' subordinationist stance and his particular rejection of the Trinitarian doctrine are based primarily on the affirmation of ἀγεννησία as the proper definition of the divine essence—οὐσία—. ¹ According to Eunomius, God's true essence lies in his being ἀγέννητος; this title does not simply designate a divine perfection but reveals the reality of God and defines his being. ² The consideration of ἀγεννησία as God's proper name is of considerable theological importance and to a certain extent it reshapes the subordinationist polemic. While the preceding Arian debate was centered on the acceptance or rejection of a generation in God that could account for the substantial unity between the Father and the Son, the core of the Eunomian polemic revolves around the issue of language concerning God. ³ A logical continuity between both the Arian and Eunomian positions can be identified: one of the principles of Arian Subordinationism is the affirmation that the one God is absolutely unknowable and incomprehensible—ἄγνωστος, ἀκατάληπτος, ἀνεννόητος—not only for men, but also for the Onlybegotten Son. ⁴ This means that God is confined within an impassable abyss that renders impossible any discourse concerning him and, *a fortiori*, any positive affirmation regarding the divine οὐσία. It is therefore logical that Eunomius in his defense of ἀγεννησία inverts the Arian principle and dogmatically proclaims that it is possible to speak about God if the language being used proceeds from God himself, given that only a divine language could be adequate to refer to God in his absolute unknowability. Through this path Eunomius maintains that the name Unbegotten is a divinely revealed name and the only one that designates God in himself. ⁵

1 Cf. Eunomius, *Apologia* 7,10–11 (Vaggione, 40).

2 Cf. M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, Roma 1975, 253–259; 462–488.

3 Cf. R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy* 318–381, Edinburgh 1988, 603–611; 617–636.

4 Cf. Philostorgius, *HE* II 3 (GCS 21, 14,1–9). Cf. R. Winling, "Introduction," in: Grégoire de Nysse, *Contra Eunomium* I 1–146, SC 521, Paris 2008, 68.

5 Cf. L. Abramowski, "Eunomios," *RAC* 6 (1966) 945ff. About Eunomius theology, see M.R. Barnes, *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington D.C. 2001, 173–219.

Bearing in mind this Eunomian principle, it is not surprising that the subject of divine attributes—understood as perfections we attribute to God according to the characteristics proper to human language—occupies an important place in the debate between Gregory of Nyssa and Eunomius.⁶ It is likewise reasonable that this subject is notably present both in the three volumes of *Contra Eunomium* and in *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii*.⁷ In fact, in these writings the theology of God became inseparable from the epistemological questions regarding knowledge and human language concerning God and thus, ultimately, it was also inseparable from the consideration of the ontological order of creation, inasmuch as this constitutes the foundation of man's access to God. It could be said that the connection between theology, ontology, and Scripture in the entirety of Gregory's thought can be found in *Contra Eunomium* in the relation between Trinity, creation, and divine attributes.

The interplay of these vast and important issues makes Gregory's thought particularly attractive, but at the same time difficult to analyze in a complete and systematic way. This is one of the reasons why, despite ample bibliography, it is not easy to form a comprehensive vision of Gregory's doctrine of language concerning God. In fact, as R. Winling observes, the entirety of his thought with respect to these subjects has not yet been sufficiently grasped.⁸

6 As it was for Basil of Caesarea, cf. M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names: Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Leiden 2010.

7 The epistemological issues are at the heart of *Eun* 11, especially in connection to the value of *epinoia* (cf. B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 150–175), though they are also present throughout the Eunomian polemic. For instance, one only has to glance through the *Gliederung* of the writings against Eunomius to see that human language concerning God is repeatedly at the core of the discussion about the Son's divine generation. A *Gliederung* of *Eun* can be found in: B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 413–443; S.G. Hall, "Introduction to the Translation," *vid. supra*, 62–65; Id., "The Second Book Against Eunomius. An Introduction to the Translation," in: L. Karfíková, S. Douglass, J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004)*, Leiden 2007, 76–80; Id., "Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius Book Three*. Introduction to the Translation and Analysis," in: J. Leemans, M. Cassin, *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium III. An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 12th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Leuven, 14–17 September 2010)*, Leiden 2014, 37–41; E.D. Moutsoulas, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης. Βίος, συγγράμματα, διδασκαλία, Athens 1997, 130–180; R. Winling, "Introduction," in: Grégoire de Nysse, *Contra Eunomium I* 1–146, SC 521, Paris 2008, 62–67.

8 Cf. R. Winling, "Introduction," in: Grégoire de Nysse, *Contra Eunomium I* 1–146, SC 521, Paris 2008, 68.

In order to describe the essential features of Gregory's teaching on how we can speak about God, it is necessary to recognize that Gregory casts aside the Eunomian manner of employing essential names (κατ' οὐσίαν)⁹ as well as the belief that language has been directly given to mankind by God.¹⁰ As can be seen from *Genesis* 2:18–20, names have their origin not in direct divine revelation, but in human invention.¹¹ God endowed human beings with intelligence by which they could invent language and name things. For this reason, as Gregory states, names—and, moreover, concepts (ἐπὶνοια) designated by names—have authentic noetic content; they are not the result of mere human invention disconnected from being.¹² Nevertheless, at the same time, names are clearly limited since they are capable of expressing neither the totality of God nor the totality of created reality.¹³ In a way, for Gregory language is related to the nature of things, to being itself, where we find two fundamental realities: God and creation.¹⁴ For this reason the theology of name is so significant in Gre-

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- 9 Not only does Eunomius maintain that the divine *ousía* consists in being unbegotten, but he also claims that the names belong naturally to the *ousía* (cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 151; 658 [GNO I, 72; 215]). He states, for example, in *Apologia*: “We do not understand the essence to be one thing and the meaning of the word which designates it to be something else. Rather, we take it that his substance is the very same as that which is signified by his name, granted that the designation applies properly to the essence” (Eunomius, *Apologia* 12 [Vaggione, 49]). Gregory extends the criticism of his brother Basil, who had already argued against Eunomius that both the divine *ousía* (*Adversus Eunomium* I 12 [SC 299, 212–216]) and earthly *ousía* (*Adversus Eunomium* I 13 [SC 299, 216–220]) are beyond human understanding. Basil also holds that the Son and the Spirit are the only ones who know God's *ousía* (*Adversus Eunomium* I 14 [SC 299, 220–224]).
- 10 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* II 395–402 (GNO I, 342–344); cf. *Or cat* 5; 31 (GNO III/4, 17,7–18,4; 76,6–77,6).
- 11 Cf. T. Dolidze, “The Cognitive Function of Epinoia in *CE* II and its Meaning for Gregory of Nyssa's Theory of Theological Language,” in: L. Karfíková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2007, 455–456.
- 12 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, “Atributos y simplicidad divina en el *Contra Eunomium* II de Gregorio de Nisa,” in: T. Trigo (ed.), *Dar razón de la esperanza*, Pamplona 2004, 393.
- 13 Cf. K. Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine*, Grand Rapids 2011, 160–167; cf. Th. Dams, *La controverse eunoméene*, doctorate thesis, Faculté de Théologie de l'Institut Catholique de Paris (1952), 286–287; cf. R. Hübner, “Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sog. Ep. 38 des Basil. Zum unterschiedlichen Verständnis der οὐσία bei den kappadoziern Brüdern,” in: J. Fontaine—Ch. Kannengiesser, *ΕΠΕΚΤΑΣΙΣ. Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, Paris 1972, 463–490, 478.
- 14 Cf. J. Daniélou, “Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néoplatonicienne du Cratyle,” *REG* 69 (1956)

gory's thought.¹⁵ Neither the univocity of names κατ' οὐσίαν nor the equivocity of a mere conventionalism of concepts κατὰ θέσιν adequately reflects the reality of human language;¹⁶ rather, it emerges in accordance with the proper nature of things.¹⁷ The noetic scope of human language—which is, in a certain sense, a language κατὰ φύσιν—is defined by the relation between the Creator and creature.¹⁸ Given this, one could say that Gregory's doctrine concerning the divine names elaborates within the realm of the theory of language the theology of participation between creature and Creator as well as the spiritual doctrine of man's perpetual ascent toward God.

Understandably, in a short article devoted to the *Contra Eunomium* I it is only possible to cover certain aspects of Gregory's thought regarding language about God. Consequently, this article will zero in on the way Gregory uses divine names in his defense of God's unity and will further aim to analyze the influence exerted on Gregory's epistemology by the doctrine of the equality between the Father and the Son and their difference from creation. This may help readers to comprehend some of language's decisive role in Gregory's theology and stress the fine equilibrium he achieves: the Apophatism that radically sets apart his theology has nothing in common with a kind of Equivocism that makes any knowledge of God impossible.

I The Name's ἔμφασις and the Intimate Community of Nature

The first accusation Gregory launches at Eunomius at the beginning of the dogmatic part of *Contra Eunomium* I regards his "invention" of names.¹⁹ Gregory charges his adversary with abandoning biblical names and introducing his

415. See also Basil: cf. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, SC 299, Paris: 1982, 78.

15 This theology of name is especially salient in his brief treatise *De perfectione* (GNO VIII/1, 174–214); cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, *San Gregorio de Nisa. Sobre la vocación cristiana*, Madrid 1992, 43–80.

16 Cf. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, SC 299, Paris 1982, 78.

17 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "Atributos y simplicidad divina en el *Contra Eunomium* II de Gregorio de Nisa," in: T. Trigo (ed.), *Dar razón de la esperanza*, Pamplona 2004, 390–394.

18 A. Meredith states that "for Gregory and Basil language is neither purely conventional, nor natural—the Anomean position—but in between" (A. Meredith, "The Language of God and Human Language [CE II 195–293]," in: L. Karfiková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber [eds.], *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2007, 249).

19 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 151–160 (GNO I, 72–75).

own novel doctrine of God, defiling the truth revealed by the Lord.²⁰ Instead of using the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Eunomius speaks about the “highest and most authentic being,” about the one “which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over the rest,” and about the one “which is in no way aligned with them but subject to them both.”²¹ For Gregory, the reason behind this “new invention of the names” is evident: by renouncing the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Eunomius obscures the “intimate and natural relation” between them, given that “the communion of nature is inevitably suggested by these titles.”²² With this language Eunomius means to obscure “the intimate community of nature” which the Son and the Spirit possess together with the Father.²³ Gregory refers to the names contained in the baptismal formula (cf. *Mt* 28:19), which bring about an “emphasis of intimacy” and express the unity of the Trinity.²⁴

The very names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are evocative, revealing the unity of the Trinity by pointing to the intimacy of the relation that unites the divine Persons. The evocative power of these names comes from the accuracy of their proper meaning, namely, from the emphasis put forward by the words themselves. The term ἐμφασίς literally designates the “appearance of the word,” the “very meaning of the word.”²⁵ It is not something opposed to reality, as though the conceptual (ἐπίνοια) contradicted reality (ὑπόστασις); rather, it consists in the specific content of the word, which unequivocally links the word to the reality to which it refers. Gregory approaches words with great respect because

20 Gregory—like Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus—accuses Eunomius of employing a systematic arrangement of words, the τεχνολογία proper to the sophists. Gregory uses expressions like “such a systematic arrangement” or “system of blasphemy” (“τῆς τοιαύτης τεχνολογίας,” *Eun* I 162 [GNO I, 75,24]; “τεχνολογία τῆς βλασφημίας,” *Eun* I 155 [GNO I, 73,16]), casting them at Eunomius for modifying the faith in God with the invention of new names. Cf. Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* IV 6 (SC 17bis, 279); *De Spiritu Sancto* VI 13 (SC 17bis, 288); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 29, 21 (SC 250, 244); *Oratio* 31, 18 (SC 250, 310); cf. E. Vandenburgsche, “La part de la dialectique dans la théologie d’Eunomius «le Technologue»,” *RHE* 40 (1944/45) 47–72.

21 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 156 (GNO I, 74).

22 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 159 (GNO I, 75).

23 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 188 (GNO I, 82).

24 “τῆς οἰκειότητος ἐμφασιν,” *Eun* I 160 (GNO I, 75); cf. *Eun* II 30 (GNO I, 235). Gregory argues in *Oratio dominica* III (GNO VII/2, 41,16–42,12) that the familiarity (προσηγορία) expressed by the names “Father” and “Son” reveals their equality of nature.

25 Cf. T. Kobusch, “Name und Sein. Zu den sprachphilosophischen Grundlagen in der Schrift Contra Eunomium des Gregor von Nyssa,” *vid. supra*, 310.

each one of them possesses a concrete and specific meaning, which is not interchangeable and must be grasped precisely.²⁶

Gregory is convinced that the mystery of piety and salvation is realized in the confession of the names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;²⁷ his stern condemnation of Eunomius' changing of the baptismal formula—the mystery of faith from which salvation comes²⁸—is thus understandable.²⁹ Gregory's argument on this point is profoundly realistic; it consists in fleshing out the meaning of the very terms found in the Gospel. His argument might seem very simple—and in fact it is—seeing that it is grounded in a connatural experience of human fatherhood and sonship; yet there must be an intimate and natural relationship between the Son and the One whom the Son himself addresses as *Abba* (cf. *Mk* 14:36; *Gal* 4:6). Gregory holds that the “intimacy of nature” expressed by the terms *father* and *son* signifies in the Trinity the perfect union of nature among the Persons in the one God. Hence he accuses Eunomius of rupturing the unity between the Persons with his denial of the intimacy inherent in their very names.³⁰ Gregory brings out this point when he explains that the word “Father” in a sense carries with it the notion of “Unbegotten” and also indicates the relation to the Son; it would be absurd to limit the term “father” to the idea of “Unbegotten,” rejecting the relationship to the Son.³¹ The Father cannot be understood apart from the Son because a father is only father if there is a son.³² To call the Second Person Son without considering him true God, that is, inferior to the Father, is to speak improperly of the Son, denying his real existence.³³

26 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, “Atributos y simplicidad divina en el *Contra Eunomium* 11 de Gregorio de Nisa,” in: T. Trigo (ed.), *Dar razón de la esperanza*, Pamplona 2004, 388–389: “Gregorio insiste, por una parte, en el origen humano de las palabras, que nacen de nuestra inteligencia y, en este sentido, desmitifica la posición de Eunomio; por otra parte les da un gran valor y exige un exquisito respeto para ellas, pues hemos inventado las palabras para poder conocer, y el uso correcto de ellas nos lleva a captar algo de la realidad de las cosas.”

27 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 56 (GNO II, 285,7–12).

28 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 54 (GNO I, 40); *Eun* I 177–186 (GNO I, 79–81); *Eun* III/9 61 (GNO II, 287).

29 Gregory expounds the Trinitarian doctrine in light of *Matthew* 28:19 mainly in *RefEun* 4–17 (GNO II, 313,25–319,15).

30 Toward the end of *Eun* I, Gregory states again that Eunomius rejects the ordinary and accepted meaning of the words; changing the meaning of the terms, he is able to sidestep their common meaning (cf. *Eun* I 642–643; 647 [GNO I, 211,3–22; 212,20–24]).

31 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 560 (GNO I, 188,13–19).

32 Concerning this argument, see, for example, *Eun* I 631–632 (GNO I, 208,6–14).

33 Cf. *Eun* I 177–179 (GNO I, 79).

Concerning the “emphasis” of the names—in relation to the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as well as to the divine attributes—the text *Ad Eustathium De sancta Trinitate* is worth mentioning. It underlines, in perfect continuity with the doctrine outlined in *Contra Eunomium*, the importance of the accurate meaning of names in defense of the unity of God. Gregory lists some of the Scriptural titles for God: “the Good, the Holy, the Eternal, the Wise, the Righteous, the Guiding and the Powerful”;³⁴ he then cautions the Pneumatomachi, for to assign a divine attribute like sanctifying or vivifying power³⁵ to the Holy Spirit implies affirming his divinity and therefore means one must also recognize that all other names proper to God likewise belong to him. The heart of the issue lies in the affirmation that the plurality of divine names or titles point “by their different meaning”³⁶ to the same one God. Consequently, all attributes are equal in dignity: none are better or worse than the others.³⁷ All divine attributes refer to the same God, and just as there can be no separation whatsoever in God, neither can there be any separation in the attributes assigned to him:

Now, if all the names that we attribute to the divine nature are equally able to indicate the subject, therefore, by their different apparent meaning, they equally conduct our thinking to the same subject. If, then in all other names the communion of the Spirit with the Father and the Son is granted, how can the Spirit be separated only in regard to the divinity? It must be that either his communion in this [the divinity] is granted, or his partaking of the other names is denied.³⁸

Gregory, who dedicates a good part of *Eust* to the divine names, is convinced of the ineffability of God’s essence—“the divine nature as it really is remains unintelligible”³⁹—and clarifies that the names of God do not refer to the divine nature in itself, but to the divine nature *qua operans*. Gregory asserts that the

34 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eust* (GNO III/1, 7,25–26).

35 Cf. *Eust* (GNO III/1 II,20; 7,22).

36 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eust* (GNO III/1, 8,17).

37 Cf. *Eust* (GNO III/1, 8,4–5).

38 *Eust* (GNO III/1, 8,15–9,1): εἰ δὴ πάντα τὰ ὀνόματα (τὰ) τῇ θεῇ φύσει ἐπιλεγόμενα ἰσοδυναμεῖ ἀλλήλοις κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ἔνδειξιν, ἅλλα κατ’ ἄλλην ἔμφασιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τὴν διάνοιαν ὁδηγοῦντα, τίς ὁ λόγος τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἅλλοις ὀνόμασι κοινωνίαν πρὸς πατέρα τε καὶ υἱὸν συγχωροῦντας τῷ πνεύματι μόνῃς ἀλλοτριοῦν αὐτὸ τῆς θεότητος; ἀνάγκη γὰρ πάντα ἢ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ διδόναι τὴν κοινωνίαν ἢ μηδὲ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς συγχωρεῖν.

39 *Eust* (GNO III/1, 14,7 f.; 14,16 f.).

divine nature exceeds the limits of human language to the point that no name is capable of defining his nature; if we were able to know the divine nature in itself, we would not need words to understand God.⁴⁰ The words we employ to talk about God are taken from the Scripture and correspond to God's way of acting that is knowable to us. In God's action we discover signs that allow us to know him who is above our intelligence; the attributes "good, wise, just, righteous, etc." are names of the divine operation. Even the name "God" (θεός), which derives from the verb θεωρέω,⁴¹ comes from his ability to contemplate all things.

The way Gregory uses divine attributes and the names of God, both when speaking of God in himself and in reference to the divine Persons, reveals, thus, a profound respect for the particular meaning and cognitive value of the words. At the same time, this great trust in human language does not overshadow the firm affirmation that God is superior to human knowledge: for man, God is transcendent and ineffable. Confidence in the possibilities of human language is accordingly balanced by respect for divine ineffability.

II "The Father and I are One"

Gregory often cites the Johannine verses regarding the unity between the Father and the Son, not only in his writings against Eunomian Subordinationism, but also in his contemplation of the Trinitarian unity that is extended to all men through Christ and is consummated by the Holy Spirit in glory.⁴² Under-

40 According to Gregory, God has no need of language because he has no body; the Father does not need language to communicate with the Son since there is no διάστασις between them; they share the same nature and the same will. Only bodily natures require language to communicate their ideas. Language is necessary only when there is a gap to be bridged, a distance to be covered (cf. *Eun* II 214 [GNO I, 287,26–29]; *Eun* II 282 [GNO I, 309,14 ff.]; cf. A. Meredith, "The Language of God and Human Language [CE II 195–293]," in: L. Karfiková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber [eds.], *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2007, 253–255).

41 Cf. *Eust* (GNO III/1, 8,15 ff.); *Abl* (GNO III/1, 44,7–16); *Eun* II 149 (GNO I, 268,30–260,2); *Eun* II 242 (GNO I, 297,15–16); *Deit fil* (GNO X/2, 143). In these writings and several others, Gregory alludes to the possibility that θεός and θεότης are etymologically rooted in the verb θεωρέω. On this issue, see J. Daniélou, *L'Être et le Temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970, 2; G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man. Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Ablabium*, Leiden 2007, 29.

42 L.F. Mateo-Seco, "La unidad y la gloria (Jn 17,21–23 en el pensamiento de Gregorio de

standably, in his polemic against Eunomius, Gregory particularly highlights the fact that the unity between the Father and the Son is a unity in essence, and thus *John* 10:30 plays a central role. Contrary to Eunomius' claim, the Father and the Son are perfectly equal since the union between them is eternal, perfect, and indissoluble.

Gregory cites *John* 10:30 for the first time in *Eun* 1 in his discussion of the order of the Persons in the Trinity. Eunomius uses the enumeration of the Persons in the baptismal formula to claim that among the Persons there is a gradation not only in order but also in nature; the Son and the Holy Spirit are thus subordinated as inferior *ousías*.⁴³ Gregory, by contrast, alludes to *John* 10:30, 2 *Corinthians* 13:13, and 1 *Corinthians* 12:4 to illustrate that it is impossible introduce a gradation in the nature of the Persons based on their enumeration given that the Scriptures sometimes name them in a different order.⁴⁴ The order in which the Persons are listed does not imply any difference in nature.⁴⁵ On the contrary, the sequence of the words is due to the fact that in human speech it is impossible to name the three Persons simultaneously.⁴⁶ Nonetheless—and this is more relevant still—the *ordo personarum* acknowledged by Gregory in the Trinity is not an *ordo naturarum* because, in the first place, the Trinity's substantial oneness excludes any distinction in nature between the Persons and, in the second place, the order of the Persons that arises from the Father as origin, from whom the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed, is an order that implies neither a "before" nor an "after," neither a "more" nor a "less."⁴⁷

Nisa)," in: J. Chapa (ed.), *Signum et testimonium. Estudios en honor del Prof. Antonio García-Moreno*, Pamplona 2003, 179–200.

43 This thesis is presented by Eunomius in his *Apology* number 25 and is refuted by Basil in the third book of *Adversus Eunomium* (cf. Eunomio, *Apologia* 25 [Vaggione, 66–68]; Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* III, 1–5 [SC 305, 144–165]).

44 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 198 (GNO I, 84,19–23).

45 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 201 (GNO I, 85,6–8).

46 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 203 (GNO I, 86,1–7).

47 In this regard, Gregory's use of the notion "cause" in relation to the Trinity is very important. Causality is not assigned to God according to nature; rather, it refers to the Persons. Bearing this in mind, the order of the Persons does not derive from a diversity of nature but from the relationship to the Father who is the principle—the cause—of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 378–379 (GNO I, 138,5–20) *Abl* (GNO III/1, 55,21–56,10); *Or dom* III (GNO VII/2, 39,15–43,15); cf. A. De Halleux, "‘Manifesté par le Fils.’ Aux origines d’une formule pneumatologique," in A. De Halleux, *Patrologie et Oecuménisme. Recueil d’Études*, Leuven 1990, 361–364; cf. M. Brugarolas, "La procesión del Espíritu Santo en Gregorio de Nisa," *Scripta Theologica* 44 (2012) 53–55.

The manner in which Gregory sets out his thought concerning the unity between the Father and the Son in *Eun* I 498–503 exhibits the height of his Trinitarian doctrine. According to Gregory the substantial unity between the Father and the Son is the key both to overcoming Sabellius' error and to avoiding Arianism. In fact, when he speaks of the "Father" and the "Son" the Lord himself reveals "the unity of nature in the two subjects, the relation to each other being signified naturally, both by the names and also by the very words of the Lord."⁴⁸ Gregory, who avails himself of the key notion of *σχέσις* to refer to the unity in nature between the Father and the Son,⁴⁹ again emphasizes—as he did in the beginning of *Eun* I⁵⁰—the significance of the names "Father" and "Son" in the revelation of God's oneness. This time Gregory centers his attention not on the baptismal formula, but on the words "I and the Father are one" of *John* 10:30: the Lord's confession of the Father reveals that the Son is not without principle and manifests, at the same time, the community of nature by his unity with the Father.⁵¹ The importance of the meaning of these names is thus clear: they reveal both the intimacy of nature and the distinction between the Father and the Son. For this reason Gregory underscores *John* 10:30 as the key to arriving at orthodox doctrine in the face of the extremes of Sabellius and Arius. On the one hand, the words of the Lord in which he distinguishes himself from the Father leave no room for "[bringing] the individuality of the *hypostases* into confusion" as Modalism does; on the other hand, the affirmation of unity makes it impossible to introduce a distinction of nature between the Father and the Son as Subordinationism does.⁵² Gregory writes, "What is signified in this saying by the unity which applies to the Father and Son can only be unity of being itself."⁵³ God's unity is first of all a unity of essence (οὐσία); it is not only a moral unity based in the will, that which is in a certain sense accessible to a saint who

48 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 498 (GNO I, 170,13–16): Πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν παρὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκούσαντες ἐν δύο τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς φύσεως ἐδιδάχθημεν, ὑπὸ τε τῶν ὀνομάτων φυσικῶς [διὰ] τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλα σχέσεως σημαινόμενης καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῆς πάλιν τῆς τοῦ κυρίου φωνῆς.

49 On the notion of relation (*σχέσις*) in Gregory, see: G. Maspero, "Relazione e ontologia in Gregorio di Nissa e Agostino di Ippona," *Scripta Theologica* 47 (2015) 612–622; I. Vigorelli, "The *σχέσις* of the Father and of the Son in the *Contra Eunomium* I," *vid. infra*, 538–556.

50 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 151–160 (GNO I, 72–75). On this matter, see the previous explanation of the meaning of names and the intimate community of nature in the Trinity.

51 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 499 (GNO I, 170,17–20).

52 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 499 (GNO I, 170,20–27).

53 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 500 (GNO I, 170,28–171,2): οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο τί ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ τὸ διὰ τῆς ἐνότητος ἐπὶ πατρός καὶ υἱοῦ σημαινόμενον πλὴν κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτῆν.

has assimilated himself to the divine will, but a unity according to substance, proper to those who possess the same nature and therefore proper to God. Gregory explains:

One human being becomes one with another, when by conscious purpose they are, as the Lord puts it, ‘perfected into one’ (*John* 17:23), the natural bond adding to itself the unity of purpose. The Father and the Son are also one, the community of being and of purpose coalescing into unity. But if they were combined in will alone and divided in nature, how could he claim for himself unity with the Father, when separated in the most important respect? Having heard therefore that ‘I and the Father are one’ (*John* 10:30), we have been taught by his voice both that the Lord has a Cause and that the Son and the Father are indistinguishable in nature, not blurring together our conception of them into one *hypostasis*, but preserving distinct the individuality of the *hypostases*, without dividing the unity of being as we do with the persons.⁵⁴

It is a substantial unity in which the divine Persons are not confused: the unity is not diminished by the distinction of Persons. For this reason, Gregory highlights “the reality of origin with the word αἰτία—a preferred term in Greek theology—in order to emphasize that the Father is true ‘cause’ of the Son, that is, the Father truly begets the Son. Each one is in the other: the Father does not go out of himself to communicate his substance to the Son.”⁵⁵ This unity in distinction is rejected by Eunomius when he considers the binomial *unbegotten* (ἀγέννητον) and *begotten* (γεννητόν) as though they were two principles;⁵⁶ at least this is how Gregory presents Eunomius’ doctrine, pushing his

54 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* 1 502–503 (GNO I, 171,15–172,3): διὰ τοῦτο ἄνθρωπος πρὸς ἄνθρωπον ἐν γίνεται, ὅταν διὰ προαιρέσεως, καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ κύριος, τελειωθῶσιν εἰς τὸ ἓν, τῆς φυσικῆς συναφείας τὴν κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἐνότητα προσλαβούσης. καὶ ὁ πατήρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν εἰσι, τῆς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν κοινωνίας εἰς τὸ ἓν συνδραμούσης. εἰ δὲ τῷ θελήματι μόνῳ συνηρμοσμένος κατὰ τὴν φύσιν διήρητο, πῶς ἐμαρτύρει ἑαυτῷ τὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἐνότητα, τῷ κυριωτάτῳ διεσχιζμένος; Ἀκούσαντες τοίνυν ὅτι Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμεν, τό τε ἐξ αἰτίου τὸν κύριον καὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἀπαράλλακτον τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ἐπαιδεύθημεν, οὐκ εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν τὴν περὶ αὐτῶν ἔννοιαν συναλείφοντες, ἀλλὰ φυλάσσοντες μὲν διηρημένην τὴν τῶν ὑποστάσεων ιδιότητα, οὐ συνδιαιροῦντες δὲ τοῖς προσώποις τὴν τῆς οὐσίας ἐνότητα.

55 L.F. Mateo-Seco, “La unidad y la gloria (Jn 17,21–23 en el pensamiento de Gregorio de Nisa),” in: J. Chapa (ed.), *Signum et testimonium. Estudios en honor del Prof. Antonio García-Moreno*, Pamplona 2003, 180.

56 Cf. E. Cavalcanti, *Studi eunomiani*, “Orientalia Christiana Analecta” 202, Roma 1976, 78.

argument to its extreme, reducing it to a particular kind of Manichaeism.⁵⁷ In any case, Eunomius' position introduces a rift between the Father and the Son that entails absolute incommunicability between the two in terms of *ousía*. In other words, according to Eunomius, the Scriptural signs by which we identify the Unbegotten God—"he is good, he is generous, he is holy, just and sacred, invisible and immortal, not liable to decay, change or alteration, powerful, wise, beneficent, sovereign, judge and so forth"⁵⁸—are unmixed and incommunicable⁵⁹ and can in no way be shared by the one who is begotten. Consequently, Gregory accuses Eunomius of introducing a dialectical opposition between the Father and the Son, making them into two opposing principles.

In *Contra Eunomium* III, Gregory accuses Eunomius again of "restarting the disease of the Manichees in his own doctrines"⁶⁰ and "becoming another Mani"⁶¹ by refusing to apply the title "Good" to the Lord. One of the Scriptural texts used by Eunomius to justify his Subordinationist doctrine was precisely the passage where Jesus asks, "Why do you call me 'Good'? There is none good save one, God" (*Mt* 19:17). In his reasoning, Gregory puts forward an array of Scriptural texts witnessing to the Lord's divinity and inquires: "Yet if in fact prophets, evangelists and apostles proclaim the godhead of the Onlybegotten, and it is asserted by the Lord himself that the title of goodness belongs properly to God, how can the one who shares the godhead not also share the goodness?"⁶² The argument then moves to the unity of God, the "one" who is Good. Gregory cites *John* 17:10, stating that the Son is "he that has the Father in him, and embraces all that is the Father's, along with everything else plainly possesses goodness. The Son is therefore good."⁶³ He then explains the meaning of the unity between the Father and the Son in *Matthew* 19:17:

57 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 504 ff. (GNO I, 172–174).

58 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 513 (GNO I, 174,25–28): ὅτι ἀγαθὸς ὅτι χρηστὸς ὅτι ἅγιος δίκαιός τε καὶ ὁσιος ἀόρατός τε καὶ ἀθάνατος, φθορᾶς τε καὶ τροπῆς καὶ ἀλλοιώσεως ἀνεπίδεκτος, δυνατὸς σοφὸς εὐεργέτης κύριος κριτὴς πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα.

59 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 511 (GNO I, 174,11–13): ἄμικτός τίς ἐστι καὶ ἀκοινωνήτος ἢ τῶν ὑποκειμένων διάκρισις, οὐδὲν τοῖς τῶν ἐπιθεωρουμένων γνωρίσμασι διὰ τίνος κοινωνίας συγχεομένη.

60 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 4 (GNO II, 265,20–21).

61 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 7 (GNO II, 266,20); cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 55 (GNO II, 284,29–285,4).

62 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 15 (GNO II, 268,27–31): εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ προφῆται καὶ εὐαγγελισταὶ καὶ ἀπόστολοι διαβόωσι τοῦ μονογενοῦς τὴν θεότητα, μαρτυρεῖται δὲ παρ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου τῷ θεῷ προσήκειν τὸ τῆς ἀγαθότητος ὄνομα, πῶς οὐ κοινωνεῖ τῆς ἀγαθότητος ὁ κοινωνῶν τῆς θεότητος;

63 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 19 (GNO II, 271,6–8): ὁ γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν πατέρα ἔχων καὶ τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐμπεριεληφώς πάντα, μετὰ πάντων δηλονότι καὶ τὴν ἀγαθότητα ἔχει. οὐκοῦν ἀγαθὸς ὁ υἱός.

Nevertheless, 'None is good,' he says, 'save one, God' (*Mt* 19:17). This is quoted by our opponents. Neither do I myself reject the saying, yet I do not for that reason deny the deity of the Son. But one who confesses the Lord as God, by that confession surely claims at the same time his goodness. For if goodness is proper to God, and the Lord is God, then the Son is proved by these premises to be good. Yet he says that the word 'one' precludes the Son from participating in the good. It is however easy to show that not even this 'one' separates the Father from the Son. In all other cases 'one' has a meaning admitting no duality; in the case of the Father and the Son however, the 'one' is not envisaged as singularity: 'I and the Father are one,' he says (*John* 10:30). If therefore there is one who is Good, and a oneness is perceived between the Son and the Father, then the Lord, in attesting the unity of goodness, by 'one' claimed this title for himself, since he is one with the Father, and not broken off from the unity of nature.⁶⁴

The assertion that the unity between the Father and the Son does not entail oneness of Persons but equality of nature was employed in the anti-Sabellian context to demonstrate the existence of two Persons in the one and only divine nature.⁶⁵ Gregory follows the same interpretation of *John* 10:30 to refute Subordinationism, which—by means of the binomial *unbegotten-begotten*—pits the Father against the Son such that the only possible unity becomes the incommunicable singularity of the *Unbegotten*. Gregory likewise argues in *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* that it is impossible to introduce an opposition between the Father and the Son.⁶⁶ In this case, his explanation underscores the unity of the three Persons in the baptismal formula: the Father, the Son, and the Holy

64 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/9 20–21 (GNO II, 271,9–26): 'Ἄλλ' οὐδεὶς, φησὶν, ἀγαθός, εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός· τοῦτο παρὰ τῶν ἐναντίων προφέρεται. οὐδὲ αὐτὸς ἀποβάλλω τὸν λόγον, οὐ μὴν ἀρνοῦμαι διὰ τοῦτο τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν θεότητα. ὁ δὲ ὁμολογῶν θεὸν εἶναι τὸν κύριον καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ πάντως διὰ τῆς ὁμολογίας ταύτης συνεμαρτύρησεν. εἰ γὰρ ἴδιον θεοῦ ἢ ἀγαθότης, θεὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος, ἀγαθός ἄρα διὰ τῶν τεθέντων ὁ υἱὸς ἀναπέφηνεν. ἀλλὰ, φησί, τοῦ ἐνός ἢ λέξις ἀποκρίναι τὸν ἰὸν τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ κοινωνίας. ἀλλὰ ῥᾷδιον δείξειαι ὅτι οὐδὲ τὸ ἐν τοῦτο διαχωρίζει τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸν πατέρα. ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων τὸ ἐν ἀσυνδύαστον ἔχει τὴν σημασίαν, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς τε καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸ ἐν οὐκ ἐν μονότητι καθοράται. Ἐγὼ γάρ, φησί, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἔσμεν. εἰ οὖν εἷς μὲν ὁ ἀγαθός, ἐνότης δὲ τις ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ θεωρεῖται, ἄρα ὁ κύριος τῷ ἐνὶ μαρτυρήσας τὴν ἀγαθότητα καὶ ἑαυτῷ διὰ τοῦ ἐνός τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ταύτην προσεμαρτύρησε τῷ ἐν ὄντι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ οὐκ ἀπορρηγνυμένῃ τῇ κατὰ φύσιν ἐνότητος.

65 Cf. C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa: Teologia trinitaria*, 582, nt. 29.

66 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 21; 195 (GNO II, 321,10; 394,21).

Spirit are one God. Gregory thus shows that Eunomius' formula of faith in "the only and the true God" (εἰς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν)⁶⁷ is an affirmation of God's oneness that excludes the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, whereas the authentic Gospel monotheism is rooted in the assertion that the Trinity is one God. The term *one*, says Gregory, signifies not only the Father, but the Father and the Son together, given that the Lord says "I and the Father are one" (*John* 10:30).⁶⁸

Gregory takes Eunomius's doctrine to its extreme by situating it in the dilemma of denying the Son's divinity or adoring two gods: Eunomius must either completely deny that the Onlybegotten Son of God is God so as to preserve the incommunicability of the Father's divinity to the Son, or he can admit that the Son is God; however, since he has already rejected the idea that the Son is equal to God in nature, he is thus obliged to admit that he honors two distinct gods separate from one another according to nature.⁶⁹ The doctrine of Sacred Scripture, though, does not put forth the existence of an "association in the Father's and the Son's divinity," but an authentic unity. As Gregory affirms, this is what the Lord has taught us in his own words: "the Father and I are one" (*John* 10:30) and "whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (*John* 14:9).⁷⁰ These Scripture passages can only be understood in light of the unity of nature between the Father and the Son, since an extraneous and dissimilar (ἀνόμοιος) nature cannot exist in the Father, nor could it possess the proper characteristics of the other distinct nature.⁷¹ Set before Eunomius' doctrine, Gregory's affirmation of God's unity is absolute: it is not an association between the Father and the Son but an authentic unity (ἐνότης).⁷² It is precisely this unity of nature and substance between the Father and the Son that is manifested by the unity of attributes.⁷³

67 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 21 (GNO II, 320,11–321,11).

68 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 21–22 (GNO II, 321,7–322,16). Following the same argument for divine unity, Gregory holds that the name "God" is equally applied to the Principle in whom the Word was and to the Word himself who was in the Principle; thus, the name that denotes divinity includes in it together the Father and the Son.

69 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 40 (GNO II, 328,7–14).

70 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 41 (GNO II, 328,20–21).

71 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 41 (GNO II, 328,21–25).

72 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 41 (GNO II, 328,17–19).

73 The unity of the Father and the Son's attributes are not on the same level as the unity of the same attributes that can be found between God and creatures. Gregory admits that man could become like God by imitation, that is, by the exercise of his will. However, the moral unity between God and creatures—thanks to which creatures participate in the divine life and its attributes—is not by any means a substantial unity. The unity of attributes

III “The Father is in Me and I am in the Father”

In addition to the verses referenced above, Gregory also frequently cites another important text in his reflection on the unity of the Father and the Son: “The Father is in me and I am in the Father” (*John* 10:38). The mutual inhesion of the divine Persons indicates the totality of the one’s belonging to the other. Accordingly, from the perspective of divine omnipotence, it can be said that he who is in the Father is there with his entire power and he who bears the Father in himself wholly possesses the Father’s force and power.⁷⁴ Similarly, in various other passages in Gregory’s works, the same Johannine text serves to assert the Son’s perfect divinity from the perspective of God’s eternity. When the Scriptures state that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son (cf. *John* 10:30), they “do not add ‘once,’ or ‘when,’ or ‘then’ in the wording, but attest his eternity with this ineffable and irrefutable voice.”⁷⁵ In God, there is nothing new or extraneous and the Onlybegotten Son of God cannot be a “strange god” or a “foreign god” (*Ps* 81:9). He who came from the Father (cf. *John* 16:28), “who is close to the Father’s heart” (*John* 1:18), and in whom the Father is (cf. *John* 10:38) has to be eternal and must be truly God. Consequently, those who, on the contrary, separate the Son from the nature of the Father will either reject him as they would a foreign god or they will adore him, but as an idol because everything that is not God is only a creature.⁷⁶ Gregory thus contends that no temporal element can be included in the Son’s generation due to its incompatibility with the eternal nexus between the Father and the Son. This nexus implies the Son is eternally begotten outside time.⁷⁷

that exists among the divine Persons arises from their oneness in essence, and, therefore, each person possesses divine attributes in a perfect and absolute manner, and not in a gradation of more and less. This is so because the divine Persons possess by themselves the perfection designated by divine attributes. Creatures’ perfections, on the other hand, are ordered according to a gradation of more and less because they do not possess them by themselves: they are received from God. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 500–501 (GNO I, 171,2–15).

74 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 45 (GNO II, 330,21–26).

75 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/7 43 (GNO II, 230,21–23): τὸ πότε ἢ ὅτε ἢ τότε μὴ προστιθείσα τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἀποφατικῇ ταύτῃ καὶ ἀπολύτῳ φωνῇ τὸ ἀίδιον αὐτῷ μαρτυρήσασα.

76 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ref Eun* 72 (GNO II, 341,21–342,13).

77 Cf. J. Leemans, “Time, Eternity, and the Generation of the Son: *Contra Eunomium* III 7,” in: J. Leemans and M. Cassin, *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium III. An English Translation with Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 12th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Leuven, 14–17 September 2010)*, Leiden 2014, 396–397.

Since then 'once' is not admissible for the one who by an inexpressible principle exists with the Father before the ages, he is begotten, but does not 'once' begin his being. He has his existence neither in time nor in space. With the removal of space and time and every such concept from the person (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten, only the Father is conceived as before him, but the Onlybegotten is also in him, as he himself says (cf. *John* 10:38); his nature precludes the concept that he 'once' was not. If the Father also once was not, it must follow from the non-existence of the Father that the Son's eternity is also cut off at the start. But if the Father always is, how does the Son once not exist, when he cannot be thought of by himself and without the Father, but is always silently implied in the title of the Father? The name 'Father' includes in itself the predication of the two persons equally, since the idea of the 'Son' comes in automatically with this word.⁷⁸

According to Gregory, the notion of "Father" includes the notion of "Son" to such an extent that to speak of one is to speak of the other. The unity between the two is perfect because the one is in the other, that is, they mutually include one another.⁷⁹ The Son proceeds from the Father, although—being beyond space and time—he never began to exist. For this reason, says Gregory, the Word cannot be found in the realm of non-being, as if there were a moment in which the Word did not exist, nor can the Father be found outside the Son.⁸⁰ At the same time, the absolute unity between the Father and the Son in no way dilutes their real, personal distinction. The Father is unbegotten and the Son is

78 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 630–632 (GNO I, 207,27–208,14): 'Ἐπεὶ οὖν τὸ "ποτέ" οὐ προσίεται ὁ πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων κατὰ τὸν ἄφραστον λόγον τῷ πατρὶ συνών, γεννητὸς μὲν ἐστίν, οὐ μὴν ποτε τοῦ εἶναι ἄρχεται· οὔτε γὰρ ἐν χρόνῳ οὔτε ἐν τόπῳ τὴν ζωὴν ἔχει. ἐξαιρεθέντος δὲ καὶ τόπου καὶ χρόνου καὶ παντὸς τοιοῦτου διανοήματος ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ μονογενοῦς ὑποστάσεως, τὸ πρὸ ἐκείνου νοούμενον ὁ πατὴρ ἐστὶ μόνος. ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ καὶ ὁ μονογενὴς ὢν, καθὼς αὐτὸς ἐκείνός φησι, τὴν τοῦ ποτέ μὴ εἶναι ὑπόνοιαν δέξασθαι φύσιν οὐκ ἔχει. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ποτε οὐκ ἦν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ, ἀναγκαιῶς τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀνυπαρξίᾳ καὶ ἡ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀϊδιότης ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνω συναπεκόπτετο. εἰ δὲ αἰεὶ ἐστὶν ὁ πατὴρ, πῶς ὁ υἱός ποτε οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ μὴ δυνάμενος ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ χωρὶς τοῦ πατρὸς νοηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον αἰεὶ τῷ πατρὶ συνονομαζόμενος; ἢ γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς κλήσις ἐπίσης τῶν δύο προσώπων ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὴν ἐπισημασίαν ἔχει, αὐτομάτως τῆς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐννοίας τῇ φωνῇ ταύτῃ συνεισιούσης.

79 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "La unidad y la gloria (Jn 17,21–23 en el pensamiento de Gregorio de Nisa)," in: J. Chapa (ed.), *Signum et testimonium. Estudios en honor del Prof. Antonio García-Moreno*, Pamplona 2003, 181ff.

80 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/7 52 (GNO II, 233,21–23).

begotten, but the Son does not exist outside the Father nor is there anything in the Father that is outside the Son:

Because the Father is not from the Son, but the Son from the Father, he therefore first says, 'I am in the Father,' (*John* 14:10) demonstrating that he exists in no other way, but from him, then reverses the saying, 'And the Father in me,' (*John* 14:10) indicating that anyone who in curious speculation transcends the Son also goes beyond the idea of the Father. He that is in another cannot be found outside the one in whom he is. Hence it is futile for one who does not deny that the Father is in the Son, and to imagine that any trace of the Father is to be understood as outside the Son.⁸¹

Following in the line of the texts outlined above, the names "Father" and "Son" considered in light of *John* 10:30 and 10:38 indicate two things: on the one hand, their community of nature as a unity of essence by which the Father and the Son are perfectly equal in omnipotence and eternity; and on the other hand, the relationship by which the Father inheres in the Son and vice versa. One final passage of Gregory explaining *John* 10:38 might perhaps shed light on the Father's being in the Son and the Son's being in the Father:

"I am in the Father and the Father in me" (*John* 10:38). Each is said, of course, to be in the other from a different point of view: the Son in the Father, as the beauty of the image is in the archetypal shape, and the Father in the Son, as the beauty of the prototype is in the image. In the case of hand-wrought representations the intervening time must surely separate the transferred shape from its prototype; but yonder it is impossible to part one from the other—as the Apostle says (*Heb* 1:3)—, nor the impress from the reality (*hypostasis*), nor the effulgence from the divine glory, nor the image from the goodness, but the thought of any one of these brings into the mind with it the corresponding thought. "Being," he says, "the effulgence of his glory;" "being," not "having become," so that both kinds of irreligious interpretation might thereby be excluded. Nei-

81 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* III/7 53 (GNO II, 233,25–234,6): ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ ὁ πατήρ, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ υἱός, διὰ τοῦτο πρῶτόν φησιν 'Εγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρί, δεικνύς τὸ μὴ ἄλλως ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐκείνου εἶναι, εἶτα ἀναστρέφει τὸν λόγον ὅτι Καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί, σημαίνων ὅτι ὁ ὑπερβάς τὸν υἱὸν τῇ πολυπραγμοσύνῃ καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔννοιαν συμπαρέρχεται. ὁ γὰρ ἐν τινὶ ὦν ἔξω τοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν εὐρεθῆναι οὐ δύναται· ὥστε μάταιος ὁ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ μὲν εἶναι τὸν πατέρα μὴ ἀντιλέγων, ἔξω δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ κατελιγμέναι τι τοῦ πατρὸς φανταζόμενος.

ther may one think that the Onlybegotten is unbegotten, because he says, “the effulgence of his glory,” for effulgence derives from glory, and not the other way around, the glory from the effulgence; nor may one think that he once began to be, for the evidence of “being” makes clear the perpetuity and eternity of the Son and his transcendence of all temporal terminology.⁸²

C. Moreschini points out that the language here with which Gregory describes the Son's being in the Father and the Father's being in the Son is commonly employed in Platonic contexts, especially beginning with Philo of Alexandria.⁸³ Nonetheless, the insistence on there being no interval of time between the Father and the Son, which is key to Gregory's response to Eunomius, is also essential to grasping the particular meaning of the language of image and archetype in Gregory. The relationship between archetype and image in Gregory's thought—contrary to what is held by Philo of Alexandria—is not a relationship between the sensible and the intelligible worlds nor between the intelligible world and the Logos.⁸⁴ It is rather a relationship that excludes any interval in time, entirely transcending the temporal: it is an eternal and perfect relationship between the Father and the Son that occurs within the divine immanence.

In Platonism, the term εἰκών means similarity but also connotes inferiority, whereas, according to Gregory, the fact that Son is the Father's εἰκών does not

82 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 636–637 (GNO I, 209,6–26): Ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί, κατ' ἄλλην δηλαδὴ καὶ ἄλλην ἐπίνοιαν ἑκάτερος ἐν τῷ ἐτέρῳ εἶναι λεγόμενος, ὁ μὲν υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρὶ, ὡς τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰκόνος κάλλος ἐν τῇ ἀρχετύπῳ μορφῇ, ὁ δὲ πατήρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, ὡς ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι ἑαυτοῦ τὸ πρωτότυπον κάλλος. ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν χειροκμήτων εἰκόνων ὁ διὰ μέσου χρόνος τὴν μεταληφθεῖσαν μορφήν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρωτοτύπου πάντως διίστησιν, ἐκεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἔστι χωρίσαι τοῦ ἐτέρου τὸ ἕτερον, καθὼς φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολος, οὔτε τῆς ὑποστάσεως τὸν χαρακτήρα οὔτε τῆς θείας δόξης τὸ ἀπαύγασμα οὔτε τῆς ἀγαθότητος τὴν εἰκόνα, ἀλλ' ὁ τούτων τι διανοηθεὶς συνημμένως καὶ τὸ μετ' αὐτοῦ νοούμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ συμπαραδέξατο. ὦν γάρ, φησὶν, ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, ὦν, οὐχὶ γενόμενος, ὡς σαφῶς διὰ τούτου τὸ ἐφ' ἑκάτερα τῶν ὑπολήψεων ἀσεβὲς ἀποπέμψασθαι καὶ μῆτε ἀγέννητον οἰηθῆναι τὸν μονογενῆ, διὰ τοῦ εἰπεῖν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης· ἐκ γὰρ τῆς δόξης ἐστὶ τὸ ἀπαύγασμα, καὶ οὐ τὸ ἐμπάλιν ἀπὸ τούτου ἢ δόξα· μῆτε ὅτι ποτὲ τοῦ εἶναι ἤρξατο· ἢ γὰρ τοῦ ὦν μαρτυρία τὸ διηνεκὲς τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ αἰδίου καὶ τὸ πάσης χρονικῆς σημασίας ὑπερκεείμενον ἔρμη-νεύει.

83 Cf. C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa: Teologia trinitaria*, 170, nt. 342.

84 Cf. Philo of Alexandria, *De opificio mundi* I 25 (ed. L. Cohn—P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, Vol. I, Berolini 1896, 26–27); *Legum allegoriarum* I 22 (ed. L. Cohn—P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, Vol. I, Berolini 1896, 79).

imply inferiority in any way; rather, it implies perfect equality and indissoluble unity.⁸⁵ In Gregory's writings this language denotes the Son's origin in the Father and the latter's headship from which the divine Persons' mutual inhesion springs. To put it more precisely, the mutual inhesion of the divine Persons signifies equality of nature as well as the existence of an order in the Trinity: the Son proceeds from the Father.

In effect, Gregory—who in his other writings alludes to Christ in his humanity as the Father's visible image and describes the Christian vocation in terms of being images of the Image⁸⁶—is here considering the Son as the perfect Image of the Father who exists from all eternity. The Image of the Father is perfect because he is the Father's natural Son; neither posteriority nor inferiority is implied. As L.F. Mateo-Seco notes, "this means that the concept of Image has been purified of every kind of Subordinationism and of any distance as has also been done with the concept of Son [...] This understanding of the image's being is radically new, genuinely Christian, given that it suits the new understanding of sonship in God."⁸⁷

IV God's Unity and His Distinction from Creation

The consideration of the Son as the Father's perfect image in the light of the above text serves as an appropriate stepping stone to now address the distinction between the divine, eternal, and perfect immanence revealed in the mystery of the Father's fatherhood and the Son's sonship, and God's action in creation and in the economy of salvation by which we know the one God as the principle of all things. This distinction, crucial to Gregory's thought, plays an essential role in the issue of divine attributes. Gregory maintains that divine attributes found in the Scriptures, such as "wisdom and power, and being good, judge, just, mighty, patient, true, creator, sovereign, invisible and unending,"⁸⁸ emerge from the contemplation of divine operation and point to God himself.

85 Cf. G. Maspero, "Image," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero, *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2009, 411–415.

86 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "Imágenes de la Imagen, *Génesis* 1,26 y *Colosenses* 1,15 en Gregorio de Nisa," *Scripta Theologica* 40 (2008) 677–693; J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, Paris 1944, 48–60.

87 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "Imágenes de la Imagen, *Génesis* 1,26 y *Colosenses* 1,15 en Gregorio de Nisa," *Scripta Theologica* 40 (2008) 686.

88 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* 1 466 (GNO I, 161): ἡ σοφία ἢ δύναμις τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι κριτὴν δίκαιον ἰσχυρὸν μακροθύμον ἀληθινὸν κτίστην ἐξουσιαστὴν ἀόρατον ἀτελεύτητον.

They are thus “correctly and properly” attributed not only to the Father but also to the Son,⁸⁹ for they are divine names that designate God’s action in the economy of salvation and are therefore attributed to the Father and the Son without distinction. However, there are divine names that, by contrast, refer to the Persons and signify what is proper to each one of them, distinguishing one from the others. The name Begotten or Onlybegotten, for example, is exclusive to the Son and alludes to his immanent origin in the Father. Gregory clearly explains this different way of using names when treating the name *unbegotten*, showing that this name can assume a variety of meanings. It can be a personal name that refers exclusively to the Father; it can also be used to indicate the divine being in that it is eternal and without principle and can thus be applied to both the Father and the Son. For this reason Gregory affirms that not all the meanings of “being unbegotten” are inapplicable to the Onlybegotten Son.⁹⁰

But since the idea of beginning is ambiguous and has many meanings, there are occasions, we say, when one may allow the title of Unbegun to the onlybegotten Son. When the idea arising from the word “unbegun” is that of existing (having *hypostasis*) without a cause, we confess this as proper to the Father alone as ingenerately being. But when attention is turned to the other meanings of “beginning,” since a beginning is also attributed to creation, time and order, in that case we claim for the Onlybegotten that he too transcends beginning; hence we believe the one by whom all things were made to be beyond any beginning of creation or concept of time or sequential order. So the one who with regard to existence (*hypostasis*) is not without beginning, in all other respects is confessed as possessing the status of Unbegun, and while the Father is both Unbegun and Unbegotten, the Son is unbegun in the way described, but is nevertheless not unbegotten.⁹¹

89 While the texts we analyzed do not explicitly treat the Holy Spirit’s divine names, a coherent Pneumatology can be found in Gregory’s other writings: cf. e.g. *Maced* (GNO III/1, 92, 13–25); *Deit Euag* (GNO IX, 333); *Eun* I 165; 234; 273 (GNO I, 76, 95; 106). Cf. M. Brugarolas, *El Espíritu Santo: de la divinidad a la procesión*, Pamplona: Eunsá, 2012, 193–214.

90 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 466 (GNO I, 162).

91 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 467–469 (GNO I, 162): ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ πολύσημος ὁ τῆς ἀρχῆς λόγος καὶ εἰς πολλὰ ταῖς ὑπονοίαις φερόμενος, ἔστιν ἐν οἷς φαμεν καὶ τῷ μονογενεῖ υἱῷ μὴ ἀπεμφαίνειν τὴν τοῦ ἀναρχοῦ προσηγορίαν. ὅταν μὲν γὰρ τὸ μὴ ἐξ αἰτίου τινὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχειν ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἀναρχοῦ νοῆται, τοῦτο μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς ἴδιον ὁμολογοῦμεν τοῦ ἀγεννήτως ὄντος· ὅταν δὲ κατὰ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς σημαιομένων ἡ ἐξέτασις ᾗ, ἐπειδὴ καὶ κτίσεώς τις ἐπινοεῖται ἀρχὴ καὶ

This text clarifies the distinction between the intratrinitarian and the economic spheres by way of the different meanings of “principle.” Being without principle implies existing without any cause—as does the Father in the Trinity—and also means not having been created. Consequently, the title *Unbegotten* can be understood in two ways: In a strictly Trinitarian context, it means “having *hypostasis* without a cause” and is a title exclusive to the Father because the Son proceeds from him; however, when the term *Unbegotten* means being “without principle”—that is, as opposed to creation which does have a principle—, the Son, along with the Father, is *unbegotten* because through him all things were made and he is beyond the principle of creation, time, and order. From the perspective of the immanent Trinity, the names *Unbegotten* and *Onlybegotten* constitute properties exclusive to the Father and the Son, respectively. From the perspective of God’s creative act, there is no distinction within the Trinity given that the Trinity is wholly without principle and wholly the cause of creation. Therefore, according to its Trinitarian and economic senses, the term *Unbegotten* can signify both the personal distinction between the Father and the Son as well as their unity insofar as both of them are the one God who is without principle. The challenge consists in distinguishing those divine attributes common to the Father and the Son from the names relative to each Person that highlight their particular distinction.

Bearing in mind these two meanings of *unbegotten*—that which is exclusive to the Father and indicates the relation between the Father and the Son and that which is common to the Father and the Son and expresses the unity of God the Creator—the significance of the distinction between creator and creature in Gregory’s thought is evident.⁹² In *Contra Eunomium* it is an extensive, key issue which has been the topic of important studies.⁹³ A few lines from *Eun I* will suffice to exemplify the importance of this issue:

χρόνου καὶ τάξεως, καὶν τούτοις καὶ τῷ μονογενεῖ προσμαρτυροῦμεν τὸ ὑψηλότερον ἀρχῆς εἶναι, ὡς ὑπὲρ πάσαν καὶ κτίσεως ἀρχὴν καὶ χρόνου ἔννοιαν καὶ τάξεως ἀκολουθίαν εἶναι πιστεῦειν τὸν δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο· ὥστε τὸν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ὑποστάσεως μὴ ἀναρχον ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν ὁμολογούμενον ἔχειν τὸ ἀναρχον, καὶ τὸν μὲν πατέρα καὶ ἀναρχον καὶ ἀγέννητον, τὸν δὲ υἱὸν ἀναρχον μὲν κατὰ τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον, οὐ μὴν καὶ ἀγέννητον.

92 Cf. M. Brugarolas, “Divine Simplicity and Creation of Man. Gregory of Nyssa on the Distinction between the Uncreated and the Created,” *ACPQ* 91 (2017) 29–51.

93 X. Batllo’s doctoral thesis—in addition to a comprehensive analysis of the issue—offers an extensive bibliography, which is worth mentioning: X. Batllo, *Ontologie Scalare et Polémique Trinitaire: Le Subordinationisme d’Eunome et la Distinction Ktiston/Aktiston dans le Contre Eunome I de Grégoire de Nysse*, Münster 2013.

The particularity attributed to each of the persons (*hypostases*) plainly and unambiguously distinguishes them from each other. Thus the Father is confessed to be uncreated and unbegotten, for he is neither begotten nor created. This being uncreated therefore he has in common with the Son and the Holy Spirit. But he is both unbegotten and Father; this is personal and incommunicable, and it is not perceived in either of the others. The Son is connected to the Father and the Spirit in being uncreated, but has his individuation in being, and being called, Son and Only-begotten, which does not belong to the God over all or to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who has a share with the Father and the Son in the uncreated nature, is again distinguished from them by recognisable features.⁹⁴

Following this text Gregory pauses to consider that which is exclusive to the Holy Spirit—namely, his personal characteristic—in the interior of the Trinity. It is a decisive Pneumatological text, already studied by E. Moutsoulas and other scholars, and will not be treated in depth here.⁹⁵ What is of interest for the present discussion is the correlation between Trinitarian theology and the doctrine of creation in Gregory's thought. This correlation is made manifest when, referring to the Holy Spirit, he writes: "What separates him from the creation is the same as what unites him intimately to the Father and the Son."⁹⁶ In other words, God's being immutable—which is the basis for the distinction between God and the created world—is not the distinctive principle of the divine Persons, but rather the foundation of their unity. The Trinity is distinguished from creation by changelessness and immutability and by having no need of goodness from outside itself;⁹⁷ and the *hypostasis* of the Onlybegotten

94 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 278–279 (GNO I, 107–108): 'Ἡ γὰρ ἐπιθεωρουμένη ἐκάστη τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἰδιότης τρανῶς καὶ καθαρῶς τὸ ἕτερον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐτέρου δίστησιν. οἷον ὁ πατὴρ ἄκτιστος εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται καὶ ἀγέννητος· οὔτε γὰρ γεγέννηται οὔτε ἔκτισται· τοῦτο οὖν τὸ ἄκτιστον κοινὸν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγέννητος καὶ πατὴρ· τοῦτο ἰδίον τε καὶ ἀκοινωνήτον, ὅπερ ἐν οὐδενὶ τῶν ὑπολοίπων καταλαμβάνεται. ὁ δὲ υἱὸς κατὰ τὸ ἄκτιστον τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι συναπτόμενος ἐν τῷ υἱὸς καὶ μονογενὴς εἶναι τε καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι τὸ ἰδιάζον ἔχει, ὅπερ οὔτε τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων θεοῦ οὔτε τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἐστὶ. τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐν τῷ ἀκτίστῳ τῆς φύσεως τὴν κοινωνίαν ἔχον πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῖς ἰδίοις πάλιν γνωρίσασιν ἀπ' αὐτῶν διακρίνεται.

95 Cf. E. Moutsoulas, "La pneumatologie du Contra Eunome I," *vid. infra*, 557–568; M. Brugarolas, *El Espíritu Santo: de la divinidad a la procesión*, Pamplona 2012, 284–293.

96 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 281 (GNO I, 109).

97 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 280 (GNO I, 109).

and that of the Holy Spirit—along with that of the Father—are indefectibly perfect in goodness and power and all such things.⁹⁸

As can be seen in Gregory's polemic against Eunomius, this distinction between God and creatures, between the perfection of the former and the limitation and mutability proper to the latter, understandably has great consequences for the subject of language concerning God. Gregory believes that Eunomius employs the name *Unbegotten* instead of Father in order to prevent one's mind from being directed to the Son in view of the meaning of the word "Father." However, the deeper issue lies in Eunomius' consideration of generation in a purely human fashion, that is, as a generation that entails change and composition and thus cannot be predicated of God. For this reason Gregory stops to explain the different meanings words can have depending on whether they refer to human realities or to God. This is not a homonym, sharing the same spelling with another word but a completely different meaning;⁹⁹ rather, it is a single word that communicates in its different meanings the difference of natures.¹⁰⁰

Names, Eunomius, have meaning among us, and yield another meaning when applied to the transcendent Power. Certainly in all other respects the divine nature is separated from the human by a wide margin, and experience reveals nothing here resembling the greatness which is attributed to the transcendent by the guesses of speculation and conjecture. In the same way where the meanings of words are concerned, even if there is some common use of terms between the human and the eternal, yet proportionately to the separation of natures the meanings of terms are also distinct.¹⁰¹

98 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 167 (GNO I, 77).

99 Eunomius, in *Apologia* 16–17, presents his idea of *homonimia*, according to which there are words that sound identical but have completely different meanings depending on whether they refer to man or God. Hence, when *generation* is applied between God and men, it acquires totally different and utterly disconnected meanings (cf. Eunomius, *Apologia* 16–17 [Vaggione, 52–54]; cf. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, Paris 1983, 267).

100 Following the same line of thought, Basil had argued that *generation* has two meanings when it is applied to men: the passion of the one who engenders and the relationship of the one who has been engendered. Bearing in mind this distinction, he maintains that *generation* is applied to God in order to express the equality of nature, not to attribute to him a corporal generation. Cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium* II, 24 (SC 305, 98–102).

101 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 620 (GNO I, 204,29–205,10): ἄλλα σημαίνει παρ' ἡμῖν, ὃ Εὐνόμει, τὰ

This difference of meanings of words when they are referred to human realities and when they are referred to God allows one to properly grasp the anthropomorphic language found in Sacred Scripture, in which the same terms bear a different meaning.¹⁰² The Scripture's anthropomorphic expressions that describe God and his action—"fingers, arm and hand, eye and eyelids ...," etc.—belong to an allegorical way of speaking which is applied to God only in a metaphorical or virtual sense. When one strips the anthropomorphic figures of speech of any corporal element, composition, or limit unbefitting of God, there remains the metaphorical or virtual sense applicable to him. Anthropomorphism is a figurative language that has great importance in Gregory's exegesis and theology, but it would prove insufficient in the Trinitarian field, if all that can be drawn from it and said of God is mere metaphor.¹⁰³

Gregory holds that "the term 'Father,' though it is used in just the same way with our nature and with the divine, still the meanings of the words differ in proportion to the differences between the subjects to which the terms apply."¹⁰⁴ The term Father is used differently depending on whether it refers to man or God. Here we see the depth of Gregory's Apophatism, but an Apophatism in which language conveys real meaning that goes beyond the merely figurative. In this line, Gregory explains the difference between human generation and the generation that takes place in God:

We think of human generation in one way, and speculate about divine begetting in quite another. Man is born in time, and place entirely contains his life, and without these he cannot sustain existence. For this rea-

νόματα, καὶ ἐτέραν ἐπὶ τῆς ὑπερκειμένης δυνάμεως τὴν σημασίαν παρέχεται. καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσι πολλῶ τῷ μέσῳ ἢ θεία φύσις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης διατετείχισται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐνταῦθα τοιοῦτον ἢ πείρα δείκνυσιν, ὅσον ἐν ἐκείνῃ στοχασμοῖς τισι καὶ ὑπονοίαις εἰκάζεται. τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ὀνομάτων σηματομενοῖς, κἂν ὁμωνυμία τις ᾗ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πρὸς τὸ αἶδιον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς τῶν φύσεων ἀποστάσεως καὶ τὰ σημαινόμενα διὰ τῶν ὀνομάτων κεχώρισται.

102 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 621–622 (GNO I, 205,10–26).

103 The allegorical interpretation of anthropomorphisms is a typical question in Origen's thought. Cf. Origen, *Commentarius in Iohannem* XIII 22 (GCS 10, 245,24–246,14); *Contra Celsum* IV 71 (GCS 3, 340,17–341,8); *Homiliae in Ieremiam* XVIII 6 (GCS 6, 157,13–160,23). On the use of allegory in Gregory, cf. H. Drobner, "Alegory", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero, *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2009, 21–26.

104 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 623 (GNO I, 206,1–6): ὥσπερ τοίνυν ἕκαστον τούτων τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνως λέγεται καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνως σημαίνεται, οὕτω καὶ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὄνομα καὶ ὡσαύτως ἐπὶ τε τῆς ἡμετέρας καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θείας λέγεται φύσεως, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς διαφορᾶς τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ὑποκειμένων καὶ τὰ διὰ τῶν φωνῶν σημαινόμενα τὴν παραλλαγὴν ἔχει.

son, periods of time always surround a man's life, I mean the one before him, the one contemporary with him, and the one after. It is true to say of anything that has come into existence that, though it once was not, it now is, and again it will also in future cease to be. But with the preeternal begetting these periods of time, because they have nothing to do with that nature, are for sane thinkers irrelevant. "Once" and "after" and "before", and the other terms which refer to this temporal extension, are left behind by the one who considers the divine life; he studies sublime things sublimely, and he will not think that the absolute nature is also bound by the things which refer to human generation.¹⁰⁵

In contrast to metaphorical figures, when the language of fatherhood and sonship is applied to God it designates something real. If generation is divested of any corporal element and of anything that implies change, limit, temporality, etc., one reality still remains: the relation of origin that brings forth a communion of nature. This relation cannot be reduced to something figurative: fatherhood is not a metaphor of God; God is truly Father. Fatherhood and sonship exist in God in a unique and particular manner. Gregory thus places himself, so to speak, in the line of analogical theology:¹⁰⁶ between human and divine generation lies an infinite distance, just as the distance between God and creature is infinite; nonetheless, there is at the same time relationship. Generation implies a relational reality, which is proper to God and which also occurs in man according to his own temporal nature. The human notion of 'father' reveals to us something of God's fatherhood, even when divine fatherhood is perfect in itself and consequently transcends the human understanding of fatherhood.

105 Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun* I 624–625 (GNO I, 206,7–23): "Ἄλλως γὰρ νοοῦμεν ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων τὴν γέννησιν καὶ ἄλλως περὶ τῆς θείας γεννήσεως στοχαζόμεθα. ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐν χρόνῳ τίκεται καὶ τόπος τις αὐτῷ πάντως τὴν ζωὴν ὑποδέχεται, ὃν ἄνευ συστήναι φύσιν οὐκ ἔχει. διὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν τὰ χρονικὰ τμήματα περὶ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζωὴν ἀναγκαιῶς εὐρίσκεται, τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ λέγω καὶ τὸ κατ' αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο. ἀληθὲς γάρ ἐστιν εἰπεῖν περὶ τίνος τῶν γεγενημένων ὅτι ποτὲ μὴ ὦν νῦν ἔστι, καὶ μέντοι καὶ ποτε πάλιν τοῦ εἶναι παύσεται· ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς προαιωνίου γεννήσεως τὰ χρονικὰ ταῦτα νοήματα ἅτε μηδὲν ἔχοντα συγγενὲς πρὸς ἐκείνην τὴν φύσιν τοῖς νηφόντως λογιζομένοις οὐ συνεισέρχεται. τὸ γὰρ ποτὲ καὶ τὸ ὕστερον καὶ τὸ πρότερον, καὶ ὅσα τὴν χρονικὴν ταύτην παράτασιν ἀποσημαίνει, διαβάς ὁ τὴν θείαν ζωὴν λογιζόμενος ὑψηλῶς τὰ ὑψηλὰ κατασκέψεται, καὶ οὐχ ὅσα περὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην γέννησιν βλέπει, τούτοις νομίσει δουλεῦειν καὶ τὴν ἀδέσποτον φύσιν.

106 Cf. H. Drobner, "Analogy", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero, *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2009, 30–36.

v Conclusion: Human Language and God's Transcendence

Served by Gregory's works addressing the unity between the Father and the Son, this article has attempted to underline the importance for Gregory of the specific meaning—the ἐμφασις—of the names used in the Sacred Scripture to refer to God. These names convey the essential unity of the divine Persons while at the same signifying their distinction, because the Father and the Son are one in essence and one because the one exists in the other. Gregory asserts this with clarity in his commentaries on *John* 10:30.38. At the same time, Gregory is fully aware that the names we assign to God essentially pertain to our own way of speaking, which is the result of our *diastematical* intelligence.¹⁰⁷ God in his simplicity is beyond every name and the distance between God and our way of knowing is infinite.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, Gregory's Apophatism does not make it impossible for man to know God. In fact, Gregory's stance is radically different from that of Eunomius, according to whom God is absolutely inaccessible not only to our own intelligence, but also to the Logos. For Eunomius the nature of the Logos is understood by means of categories proper to created things, leaving God isolated in his own incommunicability as "the Totally Other," to use a modern theological expression. For this reason, in order to safeguard knowledge of the divine and, ultimately, the knowledge of the real, Eunomius is forced to resort to a divine explanation of human language.¹⁰⁹ Gregory, on the other hand, maintains that the Father's divinity is perfectly communicated to the Son, his perfect Image. This means that there exists in God a perfect fatherhood and a perfect sonship. The names Father and Son reveal this mystery: they are human names used in Sacred Scripture, which reveal to us something about God. Although we comprehend these names as denoting human generation, they can be used in reference to God to designate the Son's eternal and perfect generation. For Gregory, our language concerning God is governed by the very laws of creation, that is, by the laws of our created

107 Cf. A. Meredith, "The Language of God and Human Language (CE II 195–293)", in: L. Karfiková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2007, 253–255.

108 About Gregory's notion of divine simplicity, see A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009.

109 Cf. R. Vaggione, *Aspects of Faith in the Eunomian Controversy*, unpublished D Phil dissertation, Oxford 1976, 278; M.F. Wiles, "Eunomius: Hair-splitting Dialectician or Defender of the Accessibility of Salvation?", in: R.D. Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodox. Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, Cambridge 1989, 157–172, 164.

intelligence that needs to use many names, which are in themselves imperfect concepts. This means that God does not participate in our concepts; rather, our concepts participate in God. Hence Gregory's Apophatism seems to be rooted not in the impossibility of human knowledge but in the transcendence of God's reality.

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Trinitarian Theology in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* I: The Interplay between Ontology and Scripture

Giulio Maspero

I Introduction

The *Contra Eunomium* I was written in one fell swoop—literally about two weeks upon Gregory's return from Sebaste in 380—in confutation of Eunomius' Trinitarian theology and in defense of Basil,¹ who at that point had been deceased since the autumn of 378.² How does his argument unfold? This paper shows how Gregory's response appeals to “common notions” (αἱ κοινὰ ἔννοιαι) as well as Scripture—Eunomius' arguments are undermined at the level of ontology so as to reveal how his reasoning satisfies neither the requisites of Scripture nor those of philosophy.³ Gregory of Nyssa proceeds by modifying and extending ontology in order to describe the new reality made known by Revelation. To follow the line of his argument means to accompany reason itself as it delves into this unexplored territory, now newly accessible through the personal relation with the one and triune God who reveals Himself.

This means that for Gregory the critique of Eunomius takes hold firstly on an ontological plane. The theology of the neo-Arian Eunomius is incoherent even on a philosophical level. One could say, then, that from Gregory's perspective the thought of his adversary is utterly spineless. He is looking for a compromise that is not capable of duly considering the new ontological plane which Revelation grants us access. In this new field the majority of the principles and ontological rigor of the day are maintained, even if some of these require an extension so as to explain the new horizon perceived here.

1 About the chronology of the works connected to the debate between Eunomius and the Capadocians, see M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 2012, 11–17.

2 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Epistula* 29,2 (GNO VIII/2, 87). On the date of Basil's death, see P. Maraval, “La date de la mort de Basile de Césarée”, *REAug* 34 (1988) 25–34; Idem, “Retour sur quelques dates concernant Basile de Césarée et Grégoire de Nysse”, *RHE* 99 (2004) 153–166; and J.-R. Pouchet, “La date de l'élection épiscopale de saint Basile et celle de sa mort”, *RHE* 87 (1992) 5–33.

3 On the Trinitarian debates in the 4th century see L. Ayres, *Nicea and its Legacy. An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*, Oxford 2004.

Perhaps a bit bold and brazen—yet always epistemologically sound—one might compare what Gregory does here to the extension of classical mechanics by way of relativity at the beginning of the twentieth century, made possible by the development of a non-Euclidean geometry. Various postulates are modified, but the classical case remains as the limit of even the most general theory. Hence, the Trinitarian doctrine of the *Contra Eunomium I*, consonant with the whole of Cappadocian theology, is seen as the exploration of another ontological plane—where some principles change, yet the necessity of the coherence of classic ontology remains intact.

The method taken up to sustain the proposed interpretation calls for an analysis of Gregory's response to Eunomius' first and principle fragment, a response that spans nearly half the entire work. It is difficult to trace Eunomius' text back to one particular philosophical school. One cannot define him as emanationist, and the hypotheses about the sources of his theory of a connection between names and reality—which Jean Daniélou traces back to the neo-Platonism of Iamblichus, spread through the court of Julian—do not seem to be conclusive.⁴ It seems, rather, that it is Gregory himself who most intensely employs philosophical texts and terminology, taking up the tradition of the commentators of Aristotle's *Categories*. The Bishop of Nyssa's critique can be approached according to three specific moments: 1) a confutation in eminently philosophical terms; 2) an analysis according to Scriptural verification; 3) and a properly theological confutation. After a *pars destruens* that is principally based on a critical and philosophical approach, there follows a *pars construens* which is more theological.

II Basil's Defense in the Fragment I

The first part of the *Contra Eunomium I* (1–146) is completely dedicated to Basil, who is defined as “the mouthpiece of true religion” (τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας στόμα)⁵ and “the disciple of truth” (τοῦ μαθητοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας).⁶ Gregory claims being one of the least in the Church, though says that he dares speak inasmuch as he holds himself not to be as weak as Eunomius. Indeed, the latter has broken off from the Church, and the smallest of the parts of a sound body is stronger than

4 Cf. M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names: Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Leiden 2010, 65–78.

5 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1 3,3 (GNO I, 23,10).

6 CE I 89,2 (GNO I, 52,24).

one of those parts that is separated from the whole. Hence—and not only on account of the laws of nature that press him to do so—Gregory throws himself into a defense of the inheritance left by his brother.⁷ To avoid more loss of time, he decides not to analyze too exactly the text, rather only those texts fundamental to exposing the problem.⁸ Otherwise, it would be such a tiresome work that not even Eunomius could resist yawning, notwithstanding the affection that feeds the author in his work, analogous to that of fathers for their children.⁹

The confrontation moves along a personal line as well, as the critical biographical references show, turned towards Aetius and Eunomius, whereas of Basil there are only citations of the example of his charity¹⁰ and his resistance to the imperial threats that meant to weaken him in the face of the Arian theological paradigm.¹¹ Instead, Eunomius is made out to be the son of the scribes and pharisees who managed to catch the gnats and miss the camel (cf. *Mt* 23:24).¹² Here he inserts the first doctrinal reference that, in a succinct representation, speaks of his doctrine:¹³

He says that the one who always is, at one time is not; he argues that the one who is truly son has that title as a pseudonym; he decides that the creator of all is himself a creature and a made thing; he names the one who is master of the universe a slave; he aligns the one who by nature possesses sovereignty with what is naturally servile.¹⁴

Such a description is extremely significant, for it points directly at the heart of the matter—the center of the question is something stirred up by Eunomius, the confusion between two ontological planes. There is the level of creation

7 Cf. *CE* I 10 (GNO I, 25,6–19).

8 Cf. *CE* I 21 (GNO I, 28,20–26).

9 Cf. *CE* I 29 (GNO I, 31,12–21).

10 Cf. *CE* I 103 (GNO I, 56,24–57,13).

11 Cf. *CE* I 124–146 (GNO I, 64–71).

12 Cf. *CE* I 107 (GNO I, 58,13–20).

13 The translations of the *Contra Eunomium* I here cited belong to Hall, published in this same volume. In the few instances where I introduce my own modifications, it is indicated in the footnotes.

14 τὸν αἰεὶ ὄντα ποτὲ μὴ εἶναι λέγει, τὸν ἀληθῶς υἱὸν ψευδώνυμον ἔχειν τὴν προσηγορίαν κατασκευάζει, τὸν κτίστην πάντων αὐτὸν κτίσμα εἶναι καὶ ποίημα διορίζεται, τὸν κυριεύοντα τῶν ὅλων δοῦλον προσαγορεύει, τὸν ἐκ φύσεως τὸ ἄρχειν ἔχοντα τῇ δουλευούσῃ φύσει συγκατατάσσει. (*CE* I 110,1–6 [GNO I, 59,20–25]).

and that of the Creator, who is identified with the one and only eternal and uncreated nature of the three divine Persons. His, then, would be “the effort to destroy and cancel and thoroughly to pervert the religious concepts of the Onlybegotten God and the Holy Spirit”,¹⁵ as is stated immediately prior to reaching the principle of the five Eunomius fragments included in Gregory’s work.

The following citation presents Eunomius’ text in numbers 151–154. Yet his discussion runs all the way from numbers 155 to 438, where one meets a gap that is only partially reconstructed by Hall having recourse to Eastern tradition. It is fitting to reproduce the entirety of it here.

The whole statement of our doctrines comprises the highest and most authentic being (ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριωτάτης οὐσίας). The one which exists because of (δι’ ἐκείνην) that being and after that (μετ’ ἐκείνην) being has supremacy (πρωτευούσης) over all the rest, and a third which is in no way aligned with them (συνταττομένης), but subject (ὑποταττομένης) to the one because of causation (διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν) and to the other because of the activity (διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν) by which it exists; the activities which accompany the beings and the names appropriate (προσφυῶν ὀνομάτων) to them being of course treated together for the comprehensive statement of the whole doctrine. Yet again, since each of these beings both is and is perceived to be absolutely simple and altogether singular in its own rank, and since the activities are defined at the same time as their works, and the works match the activities of those who effected them, there is surely every necessity both that the activities accompanying each of the beings are lesser end greater (ἐλάττους τε καὶ μείζους), and that some occupy the first and others the second rank, and in sum that they reach the same degree of difference as their works reach. For it would not be right to speak of the same activity by which he made the angels, or the stars and heaven, or man; but just as works may be senior to and more honourable (πρεσβύτερα καὶ τιμώτερα) than other works, in the same degree also one of a truly religious mind would say that one activity excels another, inasmuch as the same activities produce identical works, and varied works reveal varied activities. Since these are such and in their relation to each (τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλα σχέσει) other preserve the bond invariable (τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβα), it is surely right that those who conduct their investigation in accordance

15 σπουδῇ δὲ πᾶσα καθελεῖν καὶ παραγράψασθαι καὶ ἀνατρέψαι παντελῶς τὰς περὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ καὶ τὰς περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος εὐσεβεῖς ὑπολήψεις. (CE I 149,4–150,1 [GNO I, 71,20–23]).

with the order inherent (συμφυῇ τοῖς πράγμασι τάξιν) in the realities and do not insist on mixing and confusing everything together, if any dispute should arise about the beings, should base their belief about what is being demonstrated and the resolution of disputed points on the primary activities peculiar to the beings, and to resolve any doubt about the activities with reference to the beings, and to reckon it surely more fitting and more effective in all respects to descend from primary to secondary things.¹⁶

This text can be outlined according to three steps. In the first place (a) Eunomius speaks of the distinction between the primary, or first, substance, which is such in a proper sense and to the greatest degree, and the other two, of which the second is coordinated to the first, whereas the third is not coordinated but subordinated both to the first—in that it deals with the cause—as well as the second—through operation. Hence, (b) he introduces the role of operations with their function as necessary connection between substances and works, which follows a descending gradation. Eunomius thereby explains (c) the reciprocal relationship (πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις) that provides the basis for such a bond and allows cognitive movement from substance to operations and viceversa.

16 Πᾶς ὁ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς δογμάτων συμπληροῦται λόγος ἔκ τε τῆς ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριωτάτης οὐσίας καὶ ἐκ τῆς δι' ἐκείνην μὲν οὕσης μετ' ἐκείνην δὲ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων πρωτευούσης καὶ τρίτης γε τῆς μηδεμιᾶ μὲν τούτων συνταττομένης, ἀλλὰ τῇ μὲν διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν, τῇ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν καθ' ἣν γέγονεν ὑποταττομένης, συμπεριλαμβανομένων δηλαδὴ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς λόγου συμπλήρωσιν καὶ τῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις παρεπομένων ἐνεργειῶν καὶ τῶν ταύταις προσφυῶν ὀνομάτων. πάλιν δ' αὖ ἐκάστης τούτων οὐσίας εἰλικρινῶς ἀπλῆς καὶ πάντη μιᾶς οὕσης τε καὶ νοουμένης κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἀξίαν, συμπεριγεγραφομένων δὲ τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν ἐνεργειῶν, καὶ τῶν ἔργων ταῖς τῶν ἐργασαμένων ἐνεργείαις παραμετρούμενων, ἀνάγκη δὴπου πᾶσα καὶ τὰς ἐκάστη τῶν οὐσιῶν ἐπομένας ἐνεργείας ἐλάττους τε καὶ μείζους εἶναι, καὶ τὰς μὲν πρῶτην τὰς δὲ δευτέραν ἐπέχειν τάξιν, συνόλως τε εἰπεῖν πρὸς τοσαύτην ἐξικνεῖσθαι διαφορὰν, πρὸς ὁπόσῃ ἂν ἐξικνῆται τὰ ἔργα· ἐπεὶ μὴδὲ θεμιτὸν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνέργειαν εἰπεῖν καθ' ἣν τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἐποίησεν ἢ τοὺς ἀστέρας καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἢ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ' ὅσῃ τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἔργων πρεσβύτερα καὶ τιμιώτερα, τοσοῦτῃ καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς ἐνεργείας ἀναβεβηκέναι φαίη ἂν τις εὐσεβῶς διανοοῦμενος, ἅτε δὴ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐνεργειῶν τὴν ταυτότητα τῶν ἔργων ἀποτελουσῶν, καὶ τῶν παρηλλαγμένων ἔργων παρηλλαγμένας τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐμφαινόντων. οὕτω δὲ τούτων ἐχόντων καὶ τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσει τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβατον διατηρούντων, προσήκει δὴπου τοὺς κατὰ τὴν συμφυῇ τοῖς πράγμασι τάξιν τὴν ἐξέτασιν ποιούμενους καὶ μὴ φύρειν ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ συγχεῖν βιαζομένους, εἰ μὲν περὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις κινητό τις ἀμφισβήτησις, ἐκ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προσεχῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργειῶν ποιεῖσθαι τῶν δεικνυμένων τὴν πίστιν καὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητούμενων τὴν διάλυσιν, τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐνεργείαις ἀμφιβολίαν διαλύειν ἐκ τῶν οὐσιῶν, ἀρμδιωτέραν γε μὴν καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνυσιμωτέραν ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τὰ δευτέρα κάθοδον. (CE I 151,1–154,13 [GNO I, 71,28–73,15]).

Gregory's response can be subdivided in two major sections followed by a conclusion in which the gist of the reasoning already developed play out, forcefully directing the arguments around Eunomius' own claims. An initial section, running from numbers 155 to 269, might be defined as a *pars destruens*, for it offers these neo-Arian positions a brutal critique—and from a perspective that is clearly metaphysical. It can be further subdivided into three moments that conclude with a reference to the inconsistent quality of Eunomius' arguments, or that compare his thought to Jewish doctrine because it denies the Trinitarian dimension.¹⁷

Following this is the *pars construens*, running from number 270 to 385, where Gregory seems to articulate his ontological doctrine developed so as to take into proper consideration Scriptural direction. Hence, a verification built upon the teachings of Scripture follows on the heels of an analysis of the difference and distinction in the world and in God, thereby sealing the thesis and allowing an analysis of the axioms fundamental to the argument as a whole—that is, the relationship between works, substances and operations. A point of destination in the *pars construens* is the indication of apophaticism as an essential epistemological element in any approach to Trinitarian doctrine.

All things considered, Gregory is led to the conclusion of his thought developed to reject the doctrine found in the first fragment, in numbers 386 to 438, wherein one returns to Eunomius' arguments having recourse to the theological and ontological material elaborated upon, so as to demonstrate how his position ends in absurdity and how it might instead be necessary to carefully distinguish two ontological levels—of which the first is the only one that is eternal and uncreated and coincides with the nature of the three divine Persons.

For Gregory's argumentation in response to Eunomius' fragment, one could, then, arrange the following *Gliederung*:

- A) A *pars destruens*, constituted by the analyses of Eunomius' text: from 155 to 269.
 - 1) *Substances and the absolute*: from 155 to 186. This is a part that concludes (177–186) with the comparison of Eunomius' thought to that of Judaism;

17 See J. Reynard, "L'antijudaïsme de Grégoire de Nysse et du ps-Grégoire de Nysse", *StPatr* 37 (2001) 257–276; and M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 2012, 100–103.

- a) *The names of the Persons*: Eunomius does not use the proper names of Father, Son and Spirit, as revealed in Scripture, rather appeals to *ousia* so as to avoid the relation (*schesis*) inherent in the names themselves (155–160).
- b) *The absolute*: between existing in an absolute way and not existing fully *tertium non datur* (161–176).
- c) *Ontology and the "Judaism" of Eunomius*: his thought is Judaic in that it does not acknowledge the divinity of the Son (177–186).
- 2) *Immanence*: from 187 to 222, this is the part that closes by exposing the weakness of Eunomius' demonstrative method (217–222);
 - a) *The submission* of the Holy Spirit (187–204).
 - b) *The immanent operations* (205–222).
- 3) *The impossible gradation*: from 223 to 269, one sees again that the section is concluded by the claim that Eunomius is of the Judaic school of thought, restated and fortified by the further claim that, indeed, the neo-Arian's attack on the Son would be worse than what is contained in the Judaic position on this matter;
 - a) *The simplicity* of the divine substance (223–241).
 - b) *The non-subsistence* of operations (242–269).
- B) *A pars construens* with Gregory's theology: from 270 to 385
 - 1) *Analyses of difference*: a metaphysical analysis of the distinction of what is real and of difference (270–293):
 - a) *The personal characteristics* of the Father, the Son and the Spirit (270–281).
 - b) *The response* to Eunomius: there can be no better and worse in God (282–293).
 - 2) *A Scriptural verification* connected to the matter (294–316).
 - 3) A study of the *operations-works* relationship (317–385).
 - a) *Operations and honor* (317–340).
 - b) *Eternity and time* (341–366).
 - c) *Apophaticism* (367–385).
- c) *A concise conclusion* that lines up his summaries: from 386 to 438.

Gregory's response to Eunomius will here be analyzed, following a reading of the text as indicated in the proposed *Gliederung*, to which the titles of the various sections make reference.

III An Analysis

A *Pars destruens*

1 Substances and the Absolute (155–186)

a *The Names of the Persons* (155–160)

Significantly, Gregory begins his arguments with a prayer: “May the true God the Son of the true God by the guiding of the Holy Spirit direct our words towards the truth.”¹⁸ A point of departure in his argumentation as a whole is that Eunomius never uses the names of the Persons, rather makes an appeal to philosophical terminology.¹⁹ His commentary is particularly valuable within the framework of the discussions in the wake of the *homousios* of Nicea. Gregory emphasizes, therefore, that Eunomius is not faithful to the names used by Scripture, for he speaks of a supreme substance where he ought to be using the name of the Father, and he refers to a substance that exists on account of the first one instead of naming the Son and he speaks not of the Holy Spirit but only of a substance subordinated to the first and second.²⁰ Eunomius thinks along the lines of philosophy and not Revelation, introducing fantastical elements in his reasoning:

But I think the reason for this new invention of names is obvious to everybody: all men when they hear the titles “father” and “son” immediately recognize from the very names their intimate and natural relation to each other (φυσικὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν). Community of nature is inevitably suggested by these titles.²¹

The names speak relation. This is the point. For Gregory, reciprocal relation is the theological key and it is something inherent in the proper revealed names themselves. This shows that Eunomius’ argument cannot be faithful to Scripture. Yet the criticism that takes footing from this moment onward operates on an essentially ontological plane.

18 ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἡμῖν ὁ ἀληθινὸς ὁ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ υἱὸς διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ὁδηγίας κατευθύνει τὸν λόγον πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 155,1–4 [GNO I, 73,16–19]).

19 Cf. CE I 155–160 (GNO I, 73–75).

20 Cf. CE I 156 (GNO I, 73,26–74,10).

21 ἀλλὰ παντὶ πρόδηλον οἶμαι τὴν αἰτίαν εἶναι τῆς καινῆς ταύτης ὀνοματοποιίας, ὅτι πάντες ἄνθρωποι πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς προσ ηγορίαν ἀκούσαντες εὐθὺς τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῶν καὶ φυσικὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπιγινώσκουσι. (CE I 159,1–5 [GNO I, 75,1–5]).

b *The Absolute (161–176)*

Indeed, Gregory argues against the possibility of identifying the Father with the highest and most authentic substance, excluding the other two divine Persons from this category. The central point of this section's examination is to clarify Eunomius' claim, that

he attributes "highest and most authentic" (τὸ ἀνώτατόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον)²² only to the being of the Father, allowing the being of neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit to be high and authentic.²³

Yet one must be careful with words, otherwise one risks obscuring the hypostatic distinction of the three divine Persons.²⁴ It is not possible to be something full only partially, so if the Son and the Spirit are not at the apex of the ontological scale one cannot say that they exist *in and of themselves*.²⁵

One can see how the argumentation develops a tone that is properly ontological, ironically raging against Eunomius, because one should never risk confusion by incorporating spatial notions into one's reasoning in such a way that might relegate the Father to an isolated pinnacle, and the Son on a kind of lower terrain.²⁶ Indeed, God is immaterial and spiritual. Not even a child could get this wrong.²⁷

The question is subjected to a true and proper metaphysical analysis, intended to exhibit the reality of the hypostatic distinction, undermined by Eunomius at its roots and replaced with a substantial distinction. Gregory, however, asks himself whether Eunomius predicates the fullness of the divine attributes to the Son as well as the Spirit:

He may nevertheless say that height of being still does not indicate superiority either in power or in goodness or in anything of that kind. For surely everyone knows, except those who presume to superior wisdom,

22 This couple of adjectives is rare. See, for an example, Epictetus, *Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae* III 24 84,1–2 (Schenk).

23 τὸ ἀνώτατόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον μόνῃ προσμαρτυρεῖ τοῦ πατρὸς τῇ οὐσίᾳ, οὔτε τοῦ υἱοῦ οὔτε τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἄνω τε καὶ κυρίαν εἶναι συγχωρῶν τὴν οὐσίαν. (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 161,6–162,1 [GNO I, 75,18–21]).

24 Cf. CE I 163 (GNO I, 75,28–76,8).

25 Cf. CE I 164 (GNO I, 76,8–20).

26 τῷ πατρὶ καθάπερ γεώλοφόν τινα σκοπιὰν ἀφορίζοντα τὸν υἱὸν τοῖς κοιλοτέροις ἐγκαθιδρύειν (CE I 165,3–166,1 [GNO I, 76,17–19]).

27 Cf. CE I 165–166 (GNO I, 76,15–28).

that the personal being (*hypostasis*) of the Onlybegotten and that of the Holy Spirit are indefectibly perfect in goodness and power and all such things.²⁸

This question is fundamental, for an attribute is necessarily tied to ontological density, in such a way that only a perfect identification with the absolute substance can guarantee the fullness of the attributes themselves. This is, in turn, tied to an absence of limitation:

For all good things, as long as they do not admit their opposite, have no limit to their goodness, since they are naturally circumscribed (περιγράφεσθαι) only by what is opposite to them.²⁹

It is worth remembering that the term περιγραφή is connected to the theological development of the concept of the person, which initially was seen precisely as an intrinsic reference to the fact of limitation.³⁰ Hence, Eunomius' teachings would imply that the nature of the Onlybegotten Son and the Spirit could be turned towards the worse (εἰ μὲν οὖν τρεπτήν πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον τὴν φύσιν τοῦ μονογενοῦς καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑποτίθεται)³¹ as might happen in those beings which do not identify themselves with Good itself, but only participate in it. At this point there emerges a splintering contradiction:

But if the divine and immutable nature is irreconcilable with what is worse (ἀνεπίδεκτός τοῦ χείρονος)—and that is something granted even by our enemies—then it is perceived as altogether unlimited in goodness, and unlimited is the same as infinite. But to apply concepts of greater and less to the infinite and unlimited is utterly absurd. For how could the

28 Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ δυνάμεως οὐδὲ ἀγαθότητος οὐδὲ ἄλλου τινὸς τῶν τοιούτων ὑπεροχὴν τὸ ἄνω φήσει τῆς οὐσίας ἐνδείκνυσθαι. καὶ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο παντὶ γνώριμον, μὴ ὅτι τοῖς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ πλεονεκτεῖν ὑπειλημμένοις, ὅτι ἀνενδεῆς πρὸς τελείαν ἀγαθότητά τε καὶ δύναμιν καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἢ τε τοῦ μονογενοῦς καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστὶν ὑπόστασις. (CE I 167,1–168,1 [GNO I, 77,1–7]).

29 τὰ γὰρ ἀγαθὰ πάντα, ἕως ἂν ἀπαράδεκτα τοῦ ἐναντίου μένη, ὅρον οὐκ ἔχει τῆς ἀγαθότητος, ἐπειδὴ μόνους τοῖς ἐναντίοις πέφυκε περιγράφεσθαι, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ὑποδείγματων ἔστιν ἰδεῖν. (CE I 168,1–4 [GNO I, 77,7–10]).

30 Cf. J. Daniélou, "La notion de personne chez les Pères grecs", *Bulletin des Amis du Card. Daniélou* 19 (1983) 3–10; and G. Maspero, *Trinity and man: Gregory of Nyssa's Ad Ablabium*, Leiden 2007, 117–125.

31 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 169,1–3 (GNO I, 77,13–15).

thought of infinity be retained, if greater and less (τὸ πλεόν τε καὶ ἔλαττον) are ascribed to it?³²

One can thereby see the force of ontological reasoning in action, here moving into terms of time and eternity as regards the relationship between the Father and the Son.³³

Therefore, Gregory admits that it is absurd that the anteriority of the first Person with respect to the second might actually be a reality, and inquires after the ontological difference presumed in this.³⁴ The point here is that the anteriority itself does not of itself imply a difference of nature, as seen in his example of Abraham and David. These two men were no less men by the fact of being born fourteen generations apart.³⁵ From an ontological point of view, nature crosses through time and generations, in that the transmission of nature itself by no means communicates inferiority, and certainly does not affect one's being less of a man.

c *Ontology and the "Judaism" of Eunomius (177–186)*

Eunomius reverts back to Judaism, so Gregory explains, in that he denies the authentic existence of the Son.³⁶ With a reference to the most authentic existence, Gregory is referring to being as being, to substance instead of accidents:

I refer specifically to the meaning of "being" (οὐσίας); he should not bring forward differences of qualities or of characteristics, such as are apprehended by the intelligent mind in connexion with the being, which are something other than the subject itself. It is not differences of scents, colours, weight, potency, value or behaviour and habit, or whatever else is observed about body and soul, that are the object of our present enquiry. I am discussing the subject itself, to which the term "being" is properly applied, and whether it is distinguished from another being by any greater degree of being. I have never yet heard a case where of two things, both of

32 εἰ δὲ ἀνεπίδεκτός ἐστι τοῦ χείρονος ἢ θεία τε καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος φύσις, καὶ τοῦτο παρ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὠμολόγηται, ἀόριστος πάντως ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ θεωρεῖται, τὸ δὲ ἀόριστον τῷ ἀπείρῳ ταῦτόν ἐστιν. ἀπείρου δὲ καὶ ἀόριστου πλεονασμὸν καὶ ἐλάττωσιν ἐννοεῖν τῆς ἐσχάτης ἀλογίας ἐστί. πῶς γὰρ ἂν ὁ τῆς ἀπειρίας διασωθεῖη λόγος, εἰ τὸ πλεόν τε καὶ ἔλαττον ἐν αὐτῷ δογματίζοιτο; (CE I 169,5–170,1 [GNO I, 77,17–23]).

33 Cf. CE I 171 (GNO I, 77,26–78,3).

34 Cf. CE I 172 (GNO I, 78,4–10).

35 Cf. CE I 173 (GNO I, 78,10–15).

36 Cf. CE I 179 (GNO I, 79,21–27).

which are agreed to exist, as long as they both exist, one exists more than the other (τὸ μὲν τι μᾶλλον, τὸ δ' ἕλαττον εἶναι). Each of them alike exists, while it exists and because it exists, to the exclusion, as has been said, of considerations of relative value or sufficiency.³⁷

For Gregory, as for Aristotle and his commentators, substance cannot be held in terms of more or less.³⁸ If one cannot be a man halfway, but only a true man or not at all a man, much more does this hold true for God.³⁹

These are common notions in the metaphysical tradition. The example of man as a substance who cannot be in lesser or greater degree is present in Aristotle's *Topics*,⁴⁰ and the discussion of the more and the less (μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον) is thoroughly treated in his *Categories*. It worth quoting the following text:

Substance, again, does not appear to admit of variation of degree (οὐκ ἐπιδέχεσθαι τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον). I do not mean by this that one substance cannot be more or less truly substance than another, for it has already been stated that this is the case; but that no single substance admits of varying degrees within itself. For instance, one particular substance, 'man', cannot be more or less man either than himself at some other time or than some other man. One man cannot be more man than another, as that which is white may be more or less white than some other white object, or as that which is beautiful may be more or less beautiful than some other beautiful object. The same quality, moreover, is said to subsist in a thing in varying degrees at different times. A body, being white, is said

37 κατ' αὐτὸ λέγω τὸ σημαινόμενον τῆς οὐσίας· μὴ γὰρ δὴ προφερέτω τὰς τῶν ποιότητων ἢ τὰς τῶν ιδιωμάτων διαφοράς, ὅσαι περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἐπινοίας καταλαμβάνονται, ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον οὔσαι. οὐ γὰρ ἀτμῶν ἢ χρωμάτων ἢ βάρους ἢ δυνάμεως ἢ ἀξιώματος ἢ τρόπων καὶ ἡθους διαφοράς ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο περὶ τε σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν θεωρεῖται, ταῦτα πρόκειται νῦν ἐξετάζειν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ λέγω τὸ ὑποκείμενον, ᾧ κυρίως τὸ τῆς οὐσίας ἐπικέκληται ὄνομα, εἴ τινα πρὸς ἄλλην οὐσίαν ἐν τῷ μᾶλλον εἶναι τὴν διαφορὰν ἔχει ἄλλ' οὕτω μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἀκηκόαμεν δύο τινῶν ὁμολογουμένων εἶναι, ἔως ἂν ἀμφοτέρω ἡ, τὸ μὲν τι μᾶλλον, τὸ δ' ἕλαττον εἶναι· ἔστι γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐκάτερον, ἔως ἂν ἡ, καθὼς ἔστιν, ὑπεξηρημένου, καθὼς προεῖρηται, τοῦ κατὰ τὸ προτιμότερον ἢ διαρκέστερον λόγου. (CE I 181,3–182,11 [GNO I, 80,3–17]).

38 The reasoning according to "the more and the less" is a key point in Gregory's theology, something belonging to the very heart of catechetical instruction and of the soteriological dimension of Christian doctrine. See: *Oratio catechetica magna* 27,55–57 (GNO III/4, 78,5–8); *Contra Eunomium* II 165,5–6 and 591,1 (GNO I, 334,18–19 and 398,29).

39 Cf. CE I 184 (GNO I, 80,25–81,6).

40 ἄνθρωπος γὰρ οὐ λέγεται μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον, ἀλλ' οὐ διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος (Aristotle, *Topica*, 115b9–10).

to be whiter at one time than it was before, or, being warm, is said to be warmer or less warm than at some other time. But substance is not said to be more or less than which it is: a man is not more truly a man at one time than he was before, nor is anything, if it is substance, more or less what it is. Substance, then, does not admit of variation of degree (οὐκ ἂν ἐπιδέχοιτο ἡ οὐσία τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον).⁴¹

This doctrine was essential to the discussion of the difference between substance and accidents. Gregory seems to be deeply interested in it because he is trying to prove that the Holy Trinity cannot admit any gradation, in such a way that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are simply one, unique and eternal substance.⁴² Aristotle's text seems to be the background of the very reference to Abraham and David.

The importance of this point is more evident when reading how Porphyry in his *Isagoge* describes the relationship between difference and accident:

Still they differ in that difference indeed comprehends but is not comprehended (περιέχει, οὐ περιέχεται) by species; for rational comprehends man, but accidents after a certain manner comprehend from their being in many things, yet in a certain manner are comprehended from the subjects not being the recipients of one accident, but of many. Besides, difference indeed does not admit of intension and remission, but accidents accept the more and less (τὰ δὲ συμβεβηκότα τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον ἐπιδέχεται); moreover contrary differences cannot be mingled, but contrary accidents may sometimes be mingled.⁴³

41 Δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ οὐσία οὐκ ἐπιδέχεσθαι τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον· λέγω δὲ οὐχ ὅτι οὐσία οὐσίας οὐκ ἔστι μᾶλλον οὐσία, τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ εἴρηται ὅτι ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐκάστη οὐσία τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἔστιν οὐ λέγεται μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον· οἷον εἰ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ οὐσία ἄνθρωπος, οὐκ ἔσται μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον ἄνθρωπος, οὔτε αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ οὔτε ἕτερος ἐτέρου. οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἕτερος ἐτέρου μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπος, ὥσπερ 4α τὸ λευκὸν ἔστιν ἕτερον ἐτέρου μᾶλλον λευκόν, καὶ καλὸν ἕτερον ἐτέρου μᾶλλον· καὶ αὐτὸ δὲ αὐτοῦ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον λέγεται, οἷον τὸ σῶμα λευκὸν ὃν μᾶλλον λευκὸν λέγεται νῦν ἢ πρότερον, καὶ θερμὸν ὃν μᾶλλον θερμὸν καὶ ἥττον λέγεται· ἡ δὲ γε οὐσία οὐδὲν λέγεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος μᾶλλον νῦν ἄνθρωπος ἢ πρότερον λέγεται, οὐδὲ τῶν ἄλλων οὐδέν, ὅσα ἔστιν οὐσία· ὥστε οὐκ ἂν ἐπιδέχοιτο ἡ οὐσία τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον. (Idem, *Categoriae*, 3b33–4a9)

42 See below, almost at the conclusion of the ontological discussion: Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 232,4–9 (GNO I, 94,26–95,4) (p. 460).

43 Διαφέρουσι δὲ ὅτι ἡ μὲν διαφορά περιέχει, οὐ περιέχεται δέ· περιέχει γὰρ τὸ λογικὸν τὸν ἄνθρωπον· τὰ δὲ συμβεβηκότα τρόπον μὲν τινα περιέχει τῷ ἐν πλείοσιν εἶναι, τρόπον δὲ τινα περιέχεται τῷ μὴ ἐνὸς συμβεβηκότος εἶναι δεκτικὰ τὰ ὑποκείμενα, ἀλλὰ πλείονων. καὶ ἡ μὲν διαφορά ἀνεπίτατος καὶ ἀνάветος, τὰ δὲ συμβεβηκότα τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον ἐπιδέχεται. καὶ ἀμιγεῖς μὲν

Reasoning according to the more and the less appears as well in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where in the discussion about the ontological status of numbers it is affirmed that substance in the sense of form (ἡ κατὰ τὸ εἶδος οὐσία) does not admit the more and the less, either.⁴⁴ This metaphysical consideration should be enough to convince Eunomius:

So if he is wise, let him change to the orthodox view, by eliminating from his doctrine the concepts of “less” and “inauthentic” as applied to the being of the Son and Holy Spirit.⁴⁵

Hence, the neo-Arian claims do not match up with Scripture nor with common notions (οὔτε ταῖς θεοπνεύστοις φωναῖς οὔτε ταῖς κοιναῖς ἔννοιαις).⁴⁶ The term used to indicate common notions is particularly significant,⁴⁷ inasmuch as it indicates the role that Gregory grants to the ontology of his own day and the requirements ontology poses to theology in order for theology to truly be called Christian and not relapse into Judaism—that is, not fall into a negation of the Trinity.

αἱ ἐναντία διαφοραί, μιγείη δ' ἂν τὰ ἐναντία συμβεβηκότα. (Porphyry, *Isagoge sive quinque voces*, 19,21–20,6). Translation by Octavius Freire Owen (slightly modified). See also: καὶ αἱ μὲν καθ' αὐτὰς οὐκ ἐπιδέχονται τὸ μάλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον, αἱ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, καθ' ἀχώριστοι ὦσιν, ἐπιτάσιν λαμβάνουσι καὶ ἄνεσιν· (*ibidem*, 9,16–18). Other interesting texts include: Porphyry, *In Aristotelis categorias expositio per interrogationem* 115,1–4 and Eustratius, *In Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea i commentaria* 47,27–36.

44 Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 1044a9–11.

45 ὥστε εἰ μὲν εὖ φρονεῖ, πρὸς τὴν εὐσεβῆ διάνοιαν μεταθέσθω, τὸ ἥττον καὶ τὸ ἄκυρον ἐπὶ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ μονογενοῦς τε καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ὑφελὼν ἐκ τοῦ δόγματος. (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 185 [GNO I, 81,6–9]).

46 CE I 186,9–186,10 (GNO I, 81,17–18).

47 The expression αἱ κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι dates back to Aristotelian tradition (see Aristotle, *Protrepticus* 99,3–4). Alexander of Aphrodisia affirms that Aristotle's method was to move in his metaphysical argumentation starting from common human notions in order to found his theory upon them (see Alexander of Aphrodisia, *In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria*, CAG I 9,22–23). From the point of view of theology, one of the examples proposed by Alexander is quite relevant: πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον ἐκ τινος γίνεται (*In Aristotelis topicorum libros octo commentaria*, CAG 11/2 18,23). The expression αἱ κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι was common in different philosophical schools, from neoplatonism (see Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* 8,13; 17,14; 45,18 and *De mysteriis* I 2,13) to the Stoic tradition (Chrysippus, *Fragmenta logica et physica* 337,12; 619,21; 1017,8 and the work *De communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos* in Plutarchus' *Moralia*). In this way, it became a term that designated metaphysical doctrine itself.

2 Immanence (187–222)

a *The Submission of the Holy Spirit* (187–204)

At this point, recalling the arguments that open section A.1 seems to suggest that we find ourselves faced with a new step forward in the ἀκολουθία, or chain of argumentation, of the work. Gregory reiterates that the reasons he has just given are precisely those which have pushed Eunomius to not use the names Son and Spirit, thereby working against the Revelation of Christ Himself.⁴⁸

This new section opens with an analysis of submission as a theological category: in some cases it can even be used in a way conforming to piety for Christ in reference to His Humanity, yet now Gregory means to oppose its application to the Holy Spirit. This implies moving in the realm of immanence and not that of economy.⁴⁹

After having delineated various Scriptural angles, all of them indeed according to the economical meaning of submission,⁵⁰ Gregory asks how it is possible to apply all of this to the Spirit in the face of the Father and the Son, and poses rhetorically: has the Spirit been conquered by force or placed in submission like the beasts of men or put down like rebels by the victor?⁵¹

Perhaps Eunomius would say that he means submission in a different sense than that which is used in Scripture, for He is cited as third in the ordering (τρίτον κατὰ τὴν τάξιν).⁵² Yet, if this were true even the Father would be in a way in submission to the Son because at times He is indeed cited after Him.⁵³ This is essentially a critique of literalism:

But we have never before heard this philosophy, which reduces the second and third item mentioned in a sequence to the position of subordinate and subject, which is what Eunomius wants to do, if he argues that the traditional sequence of the persons indicates superiorities and inferiorities of ranks and natures.⁵⁴

48 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 188–189 (GNO I, 81,25–82,10).

49 Cf. CE I 190 (GNO I, 82,10–18).

50 Cf. CE I 191–193 (GNO I, 82,19–83,14).

51 Cf. CE I 194–196 (GNO I, 83,19–84,9).

52 CE I 197,4–5 (GNO I, 84,13–14).

53 Cf. CE I 198–200 (GNO I, 84,16–85,8).

54 ἀλλ' οὐδέπω καὶ νῦν ταύτης ἀκηκόαμεν τῆς σοφίας, ἥ τὸ δεύτερον καὶ τρίτον ἐκ τινος ἀκολουθίας λεγόμενον εἰς τὴν τῶν ὑποχειρίων καὶ ὑποτεταγμένων ἀπωθεῖται τάξιν, ὅπερ οὗτος βούλεται, τὴν τῆς παραδόσεως τῶν προσώπων ἀκολουθίαν ἀξιωματῶν καὶ φύσεων ὑπεροχάς τε καὶ ἐλαττώσεις κατασκευάζων ἐνδείκνυσθαι. (CE I 200,1–201,1; GNO I, 85,2–8)

One can see how the conversation necessarily touches upon the relationship between being and language. Indeed, Eunomius' ontological construction establishes a necessary connection between the degrees of being and the names that they indicate. In this sense, his literalism is a consequence of his metaphysical vision. On the other hand, Gregory states:

Numerical order does not bring about diversity of the natures, but the numbered items, whatever their nature is, remain what they are, whether they are numbered or not.⁵⁵

As an example of this, again, he cites the case of human beings and more concretely of Paul, Silas and Timothy.⁵⁶ Later Gregory will devote his treatise *Ad Ablabium* to the social analogy of the Trinity,⁵⁷ that rests, then, from the very beginning at the heart of his response to neo-Arian heresy. Hence, nature does not change according to the position in some enumeration, and the conjunction “and” indicates coordination:

But this does not satisfy the new dogmatician; he sets his decree against what the divine voice appoints, and having excluded the one aligned by the Lord himself with Father and Son from his proper and natural rank and connexion (κατὰ φύσιν τάξεως καὶ συναφείας), he counted him among the things subjected and says he is the work of both—of the Father, inasmuch as he supplied the cause of his existence, and of the Onlybegotten, inasmuch as he devised his personal being (*hypostasis*)—and this he decides is the reason for his subjection, though he has not yet revealed what subjection means.⁵⁸

55 οὐ γὰρ ἡ κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τάξις τὴν τῶν φύσεων διαφορὰν κατεργάζεται, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἀριθμούμενα ὡς ἂν ἔχῃ φύσεως, ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν μένει καὶ ἀριθμῆται καὶ μὴ. (CE I 201,4–202,1: GNO I, 85,11–19)

56 Cf. CE I 202–203 (GNO I, 85,14–86,7).

57 Cf. L. Ayres, “Not Three People: The Fundamental Themes of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology as Seen in To Ablabius: On Not Three Gods”, in S. Coakley, *Re-thinking Gregory of Nyssa*, Malden 2003, 15–44; and G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man*, Leuven 2007.

58 ἀλλ' οὐχ οὕτως ἀρέσκει τῷ καινῷ δογματιστῇ, ἀντινομοθετεῖ δὲ τῇ διατάξει τῆς θείας φωνῆς, καὶ τὸ συντεταγμένον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ τῆς οἰκείας αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ φύσιν τάξεως καὶ συναφείας ἀποσχοινίσας ἐν τοῖς ὑποτεταγμένοις ἠρίθμησε καὶ ἔργον ἑκατέρων εἶναι φησι, τοῦ μὲν πατρὸς ὡς τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς κατασκευῆς ὑποβαλόντος, τοῦ δὲ μονογενοῦς ὡς αὐτουργήσαντος αὐτοῦ τὴν ὑπόστασιν, καὶ ταύτην αἰτίαν εἶναι τῆς ὑποταγῆς διορίζεται, αὐτῆς μήπω τῆς ὑποταγῆς ἐκκαλύψας τὸ σημαινόμενον. (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 204,1–10 [GNO I, 86,7–16]).

In this way, any critique of the conception of the submission of the Spirit is brought to terms and according to a pattern that is repeated later in the course of argumentation: the defense of the divinity of the Son is accomplished through a discussion of the Holy Spirit. This exhibits the maturation of Gregory's Trinitarian theology, which is now developed in such a way as to also confront the Macedonians in the period immediately prior to the Council of Constantinople.

b *The Immanent Operations (205–222)*

Gregory, then, moves on to analyze those activities that correspond to substances (τῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐπομένων ἐνεργειῶν)⁵⁹ and the names which are consonant with them (τῶν ταύταις προσφυῶν ὀνομάτων).⁶⁰ The ontological elements at play are activities, or energies, powers, works and substances whose reciprocal relations Gregory discusses in a conjectural manner with respect to the possible significance of Eunomius' thought:

He applies the terms "activities of beings" (ἐνεργείας οὐσιῶν), I assume, to the powers effective of the Son and the Holy Spirit, by which the first being produced the second and the second the third, and he says that the names of the works effected are simultaneously generated as "appropriate to" the works.⁶¹

The nucleus of the question is the relationship between activity and substance, both as substance that produces as well as substance itself produced. Hence, the first question has to do with the freedom of operation—Gregory asks whether for Eunomius operation follows from substance in a necessary manner and by force, like a burn is caused by fire (πότερον ἀνάγκης τινὸς φυσικῆς ἀπροαιρέτως τὴν ἐνέργειαν).⁶² But this idea is discarded, for otherwise the divine substance would be conceived of as a composite, inasmuch as it would have its own operation intrinsically untied to itself but from the outside, like a visible accident in the subject (ὥς τι συμβεβηκὸς ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δεικνύμενον).⁶³

59 CE I 205,2 (GNO I, 86,18).

60 CE I 205,2–3 (GNO I, 86,18–19).

61 ἐνεργείας οὐσιῶν ὀνομάζει τὰς ἀποτελεστικὰς, ὡς οἶμαι, τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος δυνάμεις, δι' ὧν ἡ πρώτη οὐσία τὴν δευτέραν εἰργάσατο καὶ ἡ δευτέρα τὴν τρίτην, καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν ἀπο τελεσθέντων ἔργων προσφυῶς συγκατεσκευάσθαι τοῖς ἔργοις φησὶν. (CE I 206,1–6 [GNO I, 86,22–27]).

62 CE I 208,2 (GNO I, 87,10).

63 CE I 208,8–9 (GNO I, 87,16–17).

Instead, Eunomius claims that substances act freely and by their own choices (προαιρετικῶς καὶ αὐτεξουσίως).⁶⁴ Yet, what tie is there, then, between nature and person?

According to Gregory, the point is that the operation cannot be separated from the one who operates: “the one who mentions the agent, surely also indicates the activity” (καὶ ὁ τοῦ ἐνεργούντος μνησθεὶς καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν πάντως αὐτῷ συνεσήμενε).⁶⁵ He offers the example of the bricklayer and the bronze-worker, concluding that:

So if the two are conceived together, the activity itself and the one who performs the action, how in Eunomius’ statement can the activity which produces the second being be said to “accompany” the first being, since it stands by itself half-way (μεσιτεύουσα) between the two, and neither coincides with the first in nature nor closely attached to the second? It is separate from the first, inasmuch as it is not a subsistent being (φύσις) but the motion of a subsistent being (φύσεως κίνησις), and it does not coincide with the second, inasmuch as it has in itself constituted not mere activity but an active being (ἐνεργὸν οὐσίαν).⁶⁶

This text is essential to Gregory’s reasoning in that it does not allow that activity can be ontologically placed halfway between operating substance and the substance operated upon—instead, the operation ought to be intrinsic to the substance itself. The vocabulary used is particularly telling, both from a Platonic-Aristotelian (μεσιτεύουσα) and later theological perspective, and especially in what regards the theology of the energies. The definition of ἐνέργεια as movement of nature (φύσεως κίνησις) indeed has a long tradition that through Gregory unites Aristotle⁶⁷ to John of Damascus.⁶⁸

64 CE I 208,9–10 (GNO I, 87,17–18).

65 CE I 209,9–10 (GNO I, 88,2–3).

66 εἰ οὖν τὰ δύο μετ’ ἀλλήλων νοεῖται, αὐτῇ τε ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ὁ κατ’ αὐτὴν κινούμενος, πῶς ἐνταῦθα ἔπεσθαι λέγεται τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῇ πρώτῃ ἢ τὴν δευτέραν οὐσίαν ἀπεργαζομένη ἐνέργεια, μεσιτεύουσά πως δι’ ἑαυτῆς ἀμφοτέραις καὶ οὔτε τῇ πρώτῃ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν συμβαίνουσα οὔτε πρὸς τὴν δευτέραν συναπτομένη; τῆς μὲν γὰρ κεχώρισται τῷ μὴ φύσις εἶναι, ἀλλὰ φύσεως κίνησις, τῇ δὲ μεθ’ ἑαυτὴν οὐ συμβαίνει, ὅτι οὐ ψιλὴν ἐνέργειαν, ἀλλ’ ἐνεργὸν οὐσίαν δι’ ἑαυτῆς ὑπεστήσατο. (CE I 211,1–9 [GNO I, 88,9–17]).

67 Cf. ἡ δὲ τῆς φύσεως κίνησις ἐν αὐτῷ ἀφ’ ἐτέρας οὐσα φύσεως τῆς ἐχούσης τὸ εἶδος ἐνεργεία. (Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 735a3–4).

68 Cf. Ἐνεργεία ἐστὶ φύσεως κίνησις δραστική· δραστικὸν δὲ λέγεται τὸ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ κινούμενον. (John

But Eunomius also contradicts philosophical reasoning, for he calls the substance of the Son and that of the Spirit *works* (ἔργον)⁶⁹ of the Father but does not allow them to maintain their natures in this passage, as instead one observes on the level of creation.⁷⁰

Another of his errors is his projection from an inferior ontology onto one superior, making conjectures of the latter based on the former. Yet neither is he coherent in doing this in that he seems to say that if heaven is one of God's works, the sun must be work of heaven and the moon work of the sun, improperly tying in a causal sequence that which is, rather, entirely the work of the one and only God.⁷¹ Once again one sees how Gregory's argument is not limited to the critique of what pertains to theological epistemology, but situates itself on a plane that is properly metaphysical, exposing the incongruity of Eunomius' thought, which "alleges that those originating from each other are foreign and alien" (ὁ δὲ τὸ ξένον τε καὶ ἀλλόφυλον τοῖς δι' ἀλλήλων γεγεννημένοις προσμαρτυρεῖ).⁷² In this sense, Eunomius inverts the order between theory and proof, attempting to deduce his own conclusion from premises that have not yet been demonstrated and thus disregarding logic itself.⁷³

3 Impossible Gradation (223–269)

a *The Simplicity of the Divine Substance* (223–241)

In this way, the neo-Arian Eunomius considers the three divine Persons to be each a different substance, attributing to them substantial distinction and treating them as more or less with regard to the next.⁷⁴ Such a position is not, however, due to the synonymy of substance and hypostasis—which characterized Greek Trinitarian thought since the time of Origen and Athanasius—as if Eunomius could be considered Sabellian by appearance but orthodox in reality. It is not merely a problem of terminology, for he speaks precisely of substantial extraneousness, or unrelatedness (ἀλλ' αὐ τὴν ὑποκειμένην οὐσίαν ἀλλοτρίως πρὸς τὴν ἐτέραν).⁷⁵ Here Gregory pronounces his teaching, setting it in opposition to the claims made by Eunomius:

Damascenus, *Expositio fidei* 37,29–30). See also *Expositio fidei* 59,7–12 and *Institutio elementaris* 8,2–7.

69 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 212,1 (GNO I, 88,18).

70 Cf. *CE* I 215 (GNO I, 89,9–18).

71 Cf. *CE* I 213 (GNO I, 88,23–89,2).

72 *CE* I 215,6–8 (GNO I, 89,14–16).

73 Cf. *CE* I 218–221 (GNO I, 90,7–91,9).

74 Cf. *CE* I 224 (GNO I, 92,2–11).

75 *CE* I 228,6–7 (GNO I, 93,17–18).

the church teaches that faith should not be split into a number of beings, but that in three persons and hypostases (προσώποις καὶ ὑποστάσεσι) we should believe in no difference where being is concerned.⁷⁶

One notes how dividing the Trinity means to divide the faith. A reference emerges here to the articles of the faith, which together constitute a unity. Everything in the Church depends on the soundness of the faith, which is the source of unity.

But hypostatic multiplicity cannot undermine the unity of substance through the absolute simplicity that characterizes Divinity.⁷⁷ This is connected to the absence of composition, of participation and of accidental elements. And so Gregory writes, once again appealing to basic metaphysical notions:

Everyone knows that strictly speaking simplicity does not allow concepts of more and less (τὸ μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἧττον οὐκ ἐπιδέχεται) to apply to the Holy Trinity. In a case where it is not possible to conceive any mixture and combination of qualities, but the mind apprehends a power without parts and composition (ἀμερῇ τινα καὶ ἀσύνθετον), how and by what logic might the difference of greater and lesser (τὸ πλεόν καὶ τὸ ἔλαττον) be understood?⁷⁸

If were not so, the Son and the Spirit would be good through participation, or κατὰ μετουσίαν.⁷⁹ In this sense they would not possess ontological fullness. Thus, to allow a kind of more or less in the Trinity would be claiming that divine substance is a composite, something that is contradictory to its being absolute and infinite. It has already been highlighted that, from the classical metaphysical point of view, the exclusion of the more and the less from the Holy Trinity is equivalent to the negation of any accidental difference in the very same Holy Trinity. Indeed,

76 τῆς γὰρ ἐκκλησίας δογματιζούσης μὴ εἰς πλῆθος οὐσιῶν διασχίζειν τὴν πίστιν, ἀλλ' ἐν τρισὶ προσώποις καὶ ὑποστάσεσι μηδεμίαν τὴν κατὰ τὸ εἶναι διαφορὰν πιστεύειν (CE I 229,4–7 [GNO I, 94,14]).

77 On divine simplicity in the Cappadocian theology see A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009.

78 τίς γὰρ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον λόγον ἢ ἀπλότης ἐπὶ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος τὸ μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἧττον οὐκ ἐπιδέχεται; περὶ ἣν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι μίξιν τινὰ ποιότητων καὶ συνδρομὴν ἐννοῆσαι, ἀλλ' ἀμερῇ τινα καὶ ἀσύνθετον δύναμιν καταλαμβάνει ἡ ἔννοια, πῶς ἂν τις καὶ κατὰ τινὰ λόγον τὴν παρὰ τὸ πλεόν καὶ τὸ ἔλαττον διαφορὰν καταμάθοι; (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 232,4–9 [GNO I, 94,26–95,4]).

79 CE I 234,8 (GNO I, 95,19).

In cases where the existent by its nature does not admit of the worse (ἀνεπίδεκτός τοῦ χείρονος), no limit is applicable to goodness; the infinite is not such by its relation to something else (τῇ πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσει), but itself by definition evades limitation. I do not know how anyone who has thought about it can agree to say that one infinite is more or less (πλέον καὶ ἔλαττον) than another.⁸⁰

Eunomius' position is hereby rendered inconsistent on a metaphysical plane.⁸¹ He maintains that each of the three substances that corresponds to the three divine Persons is perfect in proportion to the dignity of the Persons, respectively (ἐκάστην κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἀξίαν).⁸² From this perspective the divine attribute of simplicity would allow gradation inasmuch as the Son would be utterly simple only in terms of the second level of simplicity, which would nevertheless make Him inferior to the absolute simplicity of the Father. This likewise holds for the Holy Spirit in light of the other two Persons. To conclude:

he thinks of the most authentic and first as in utter and complete simplicity, while the second correspondingly reduces its measure of simplicity in proportion to the subordination of its levels of primacy, and similarly in the last case withdrawing so far from perfect simplicity as comparative rank is also in the final outcome diminished. The outcome is that the Father's being is reckoned absolutely simple, that of the Son is not strictly simple, but has some element of composition mixed in it, while the nature of the Holy Spirit has more of the composite in it, being in the final outcome gradually removed from the thought of simplicity. Just as it is agreed that what is not completely good in some degree participates in the opposite state, so what is not altogether simple cannot escape the imputation of being composite (σύνθετον).⁸³

80 ἐφ' ὧν δὲ ἡ φύσις ἀνεπίδεκτός ἐστι τοῦ χείρονος, ὅρος οὐκ ἐπινοεῖται τῆς ἀγαθότητος· τὸ δὲ ἀρίστον οὐ τῇ πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ νοούμενον ἐκφεύγει τὸν ὅρον. ἄπειρον δὲ ἀπείρου πλέον καὶ ἔλαττον λέγειν οὐκ οἶδα πῶς ὁ λελογισμένος συνθήσεται. (CE I 236,1–237,1 [GNO I, 95,25–96,4]).

81 See Alexander of Aphrodisia, *In librum de sensu commentarium*, CAG III/1 114,17–19.

82 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 239,4–5 (GNO I, 96,25–26).

83 ὡς τῆς μὲν κυριωτάτης καὶ πρώτης ἐν τῇ ἄκρᾳ καὶ τελείᾳ θεωρουμένης ἀπλότητι, τῆς δὲ δευτέρας ἀναλόγως κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς τῶν πρωτείων ὑφέσεως καὶ τὸν τῆς ἀπλότητος λόγον ὑποστελλούσης, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς τελευταίας ὡσαύτως το σούτον ὑποκαταβαίνει τῆς τελείας ἀπλότητος, ὅσον καὶ ἡ ἀναλογία τοῦ ἀξιώματος ἐπὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων κατασμικρύνεται· ὡς ἐκ τούτου συμβαίνει τὴν μὲν τοῦ

b *The Non-subsistence of Operations* (242–269)

This radical critique is hereby used to keep in check the substantial distinction of the three divine Persons, which Eunomius calls *works* (ἔργα) accomplished by the *operations* (ἐνεργείας) of powers (δυνάμεις) that have actualized them.⁸⁴ In this way, formed substances would be marked by the limits found in the powers by which they are produced and which would, then, circumscribe them (συμπεριγράφεσθαι) together with their works:

what is produced should not be the work of the whole power of the agent, but such that an activity formed by part of the whole power had been set in motion, just so far as would appear to suffice for effecting what was coming into existence.⁸⁵

The critique is thereby illustrated through the example of the work done by a cobbler with the aid of his round blade that cuts a circle into the leather proportional to the circle constituted by the blade itself. Such would be the conception that Eunomius has of the Son, almost as if He were a work realized through a proportionate operation that, like an instrument, follows the first substance (ἐνεργειάν τινα καθάπερ ὄργανον τῇ πρώτῃ οὐσίᾳ παρεπομένην σύμμετρον).⁸⁶ From this a series of absurd consequences follows, for the Father of the second divine Person would not be, then, the first Person, but only the power that gives origin to the Son, a power which according to Eunomius would be given substance and subsisting in and of itself (δυνάμεις τις οὐσιώδης καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑφ' ἑστώσα) acting in its own will (δι' αὐτεξουσίου κινήματος).⁸⁷ Again, the Son would not be called second, but third in that such a power would situate itself between Him and the Father. And the Spirit, for his part, would in fact be fifth, successive as well to that operation which gives Him origin from the Son. Hence, there would be

πατὴρ οὐσίαν ἀπλὴν καθαρῶς ὑπονοεῖσθαι, τὴν δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ μὴ ἀκριβῶς ἀπλὴν, ἀλλὰ τι καὶ τῆς συνθέτου φύσεως αὐτῇ παραμεμῖχθαι, τοῦ δὲ ἁγίου πνεύματος πλεονάζειν ἐν τῷ συνθέτῳ τὴν φύσιν, τοῦ τῆς ἀπλότητος λόγου κατ' ὀλίγον ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις ἐλαττωμένου. ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ μὴ τελείως ἀγαθὸν μέρει τινὶ τῆς ἐναντίας ἕξεως μετέχειν ὁμολογεῖται, οὕτως ὁ μὴ παντελῶς ἐστὶν ἀπλόουν, οὐ διαφεύγει τὸ μὴ σύνθετον εἶναι δοκεῖν. (CE I 240,8–241,9 [GNO I, 97,6–20]).

84 Cf. CE I 243 (GNO I, 98,1–9).

85 μὴ πάσης τῆς τοῦ ἐνεργούντος δυνάμεως ἔργον ἢ τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα, ἀλλὰ τινος μερικῆς ἐνεργείας τοσοῦτον ἐκ τῆς πάσης δυνάμεως κινήθεισης, ὅσον σύμμετρον ἔμελλε τῇ ἀπεργασίᾳ τοῦ γινομένου φανήσεσθαι. (CE I 244,4–7 [GNO I, 98,12–15]).

86 CE I 246,2–4 (GNO I, 98,28–99,1).

87 CE I 247,1–2 (GNO I, 99,8–9).

a hypostasis more ancient than the Son and subsequent to the Father making the Johanine claim in the Prologue of everything being made through the Son meaningless.⁸⁸

Yet Gregory makes an inquiry into the fact of whether Eunomius—so as to avoid such difficulties—sustains perhaps that activity (ἐνέργεια) cannot have subsistence (ἀνυπόστατον).⁸⁹ Indeed, in this case it would turn out as absurd—some non-subsisting thing would be producing a subsisting reality (πῶς δὲ κατεργάζεται τὸν ὑφεστῶτα τὸ μὴ ὑφεστός)⁹⁰ and that which is not existing would be the cause of that which exists (αἴτια δὲ τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὴ ὄντα γινόμενα),⁹¹ such that:

the power which effects and fabricates the whole creation will be circumscribed by what is by definition nonexistent.⁹²

Eunomius' reasoning leads, then, to an absurd and untenable ontology in that what is produced by insubsistence is evidently contained in that same insubsistence and identifies itself, then, with nothingness⁹³—for as water is not surrounded by fire, nor light by darkness, so also *that which is* is not contained by *that which is not* (ὑπὸ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος τὸ ὄν),⁹⁴ for “It is against nature for opposites to be bounded by opposites.” (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔχει φύσιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐναντίων τὰ ἐναντία περιέχεσθαι).⁹⁵

In this way, Eunomius reverts back to Judaism—the Son for him is only a name and bears no subsistence. The same could be said of the Holy Spirit, who would have origin in a series of non-existent realities (τὸ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀνυπάρκτων ἀκολουθίας γενεαλογούμενον).⁹⁶ The section thus closes with the statement that it would be better for Eunomius to simply move to the Jewish camp rather than do violence to the Christian names with a confession of mere appearances.⁹⁷ Yet not even the Jewish position comes to such extremes as Eunomius' followers, who:

88 Cf. CE I 247–250 (GNO I, 99,8–100,6).

89 Cf. CE I 251,1–2 (GNO I, 100,6–7).

90 Cf. CE I 251,3–4 (GNO I, 100,8–9).

91 Cf. CE I 251,6 (GNO I, 100,11).

92 ἡ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως ἀποτελεστική καὶ δημιουργὸς δύναμις τῷ ἀνυπάρκτῳ κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον λόγον περιληφθήσεται. (CE I 251,8–252,1 [GNO I, 100,13–15]).

93 Cf. CE I 253,6–254,1 (GNO I, 101,2–4).

94 Cf. CE I 254,3 (GNO I, 101,6).

95 Cf. CE I 254,1–2 (GNO I, 101,4–5).

96 Cf. CE I 259,9 (GNO I, 102,18).

97 Cf. CE I 262,9–263,1 (GNO I, 103,16–17).

Having first invented an activity preceding the personal existence (*hypostasis*) of Christ, they call him a work and an effect, something the Jews have to this day never dared to do. Next they circumscribe the nature of the Lord, enclosing him within certain limits of the power that made him, delimiting him as with a measure, by the size of the activity that brought him into existence, enclosed on every hand by the tunic of the activity thought up by them.⁹⁸

Thus concludes the *pars destruens*, in which the first fragment of Eunomius is criticized from a mainly ontological perspective, arriving at the statement that it is not possible to think of the operations that constitute the divine Persons of the Son and the Spirit as external and independent from that same divine substance. They must belong to immanence and not to economy. One hereby reveals the incoherency of the neo-Arian not only with respect to what has been revealed, but also to common notions—that is to say, to Greek metaphysics.

B *Pars construens*

1 Analysis of Difference (270–293)

a *The Personal Characteristics* (270–281)

In the *pars construens* the order of the argumentation is inverted: one no longer begins with Eunomius in a counter to his arguments with ontological reasoning, but now, rather, immediately proposes an original conception and only secondarily any reference to neo-Arian thought. Hence, initially, one immediately introduces the distinction of that which exists in the intelligible realm, and the physical and sensible one (τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν).⁹⁹ This is a distinction that in Col 1:16 is indicated by the terms *visible* (ὁρατὴν)¹⁰⁰ and *invisible* (τὸ ἄορατον).¹⁰¹ The reference is important because Gregory traces to this an ontological distinction inspired by Revelation, hence one that is not simply sprung

98 ἐνέργειάν τινα προαναπλάσσοντες τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑποστάσεως ἐκείνης ἔργον αὐτὸν καὶ ἀποτελεσματὶ λέγουσιν, ὅπερ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις οὐπω μέχρι τοῦ δεῦρο τετόλμηται· εἴτα περιγράφουσι τοῦ κυρίου τὴν φύσιν, ἐντὸς ὅρων τινῶν τῆς ποιησαμένης δυνάμεως αὐτὸν ἀποκλείοντες καὶ οἰοῦναι μέτρῳ τινὶ τῇ ποσότητι τῆς ὑποστησαμένης αὐτὸν ἐνεργείας περισχοινίζοντες, ὥσπερ χιτῶνι τινὶ τῇ ἐπινοηθείσῃ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐνεργείᾳ πανταχόθεν περιειργόμενον. (CE I 267,3–10 [GNO I, 104,18–25]).

99 Cf. CE I 270,1–2 (GNO I, 105,19–20).

100 Cf. CE I 271,1 (GNO I, 105,25).

101 Cf. CE I 271,2 (GNO I, 105,26).

out of common notions. This appears as evident when a further distinction is introduced in intelligible reality—that distinction between its uncreated and created dimensions:

For logic perceives one kind as uncreated, the other as created, an uncreated nature which makes the created, and a created nature which receives its cause and ability to exist from the uncreated.¹⁰²

This touches upon a distinction that can be recognized through the grace of faith alone—that is, through the personal relationship with the Creator himself, as is narrated in Scripture.¹⁰³ That which can be perceived through the senses and that is characterized by qualitative difference according to degrees of being more or less (τοῦ μείζονός τε καὶ ἐλάττονος)¹⁰⁴ coincides with sensible reality.

But such a principle of differentiation (τῆς διαφορᾶς λόγος)¹⁰⁵ cannot be applied to the dimension of the intelligible, even if one can nevertheless come across in the latter a difference dictated by being more or less (τὴν τοῦ μείζονος πρὸς τὸ ἐλάττον διαφορὰν):¹⁰⁶

Because the fount and origin and supply of every good is considered to be in the uncreated nature, and the whole creation inclines towards the good, clasp[ing] at and partaking (ἐφαπτομένη τε καὶ μετέχουσα) in the supreme nature through sharing in the first good, it follows of necessity that in proportion to their participation in the higher things some receive a larger share and others a smaller according to their freely exercised choice, and so more and less (τὸ πλεον καὶ τὸ ἥττον) are known in the creation proportionately to the desire of each.¹⁰⁷

102 ὁ δὲ λόγος εἰς δύο τέμνει καὶ ταύτης τὴν ἔννοιαν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἄκτιστος ἡ δὲ κτιστὴ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀκολουθίας καταλαμβάνεται, ἄκτιστος μὲν ἡ ποιητικὴ τῆς κτίσεως, κτιστὴ δὲ ἡ διὰ τῆς ἀκτίστου φύσεως τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ εἶναι ἔχουσα. (CE I 271,4–272,1 [GNO I, 106,1–6]).

103 Cf. D. Balás, *Metousia theou: man's participation in God's perfection according to St. Gregory*, Roma 1966, 50–52.

104 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 272,3–4 (GNO I, 106,8–9).

105 Cf. CE I 273,2 (GNO I, 106,13).

106 Cf. CE I 273,4 (GNO I, 106,15).

107 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ χορηγία ἐν τῇ ἀκτίστῳ θεωρεῖται φύσει, πᾶσα δὲ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο νένευκεν ἡ κτίσις, διὰ τῆς κοινωνίας τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ τῆς ὑψηλῆς φύσεως ἐφαπτομένη τε καὶ μετέχουσα, ἐξ ἀνάγκης κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς τῶν ὑψηλῶν μετουσίας τῶν μὲν πλειόνως τῶν δὲ ἐλαττόνως κατὰ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τῆς προαιρέσεως μεταλαμβάνόντων, τὸ πλεόν

Participation is a distinctive sign of the dimension of what is created within the realm of what is intelligible, where the senses cannot pick up on the more or less of something in terms of its quality or quantity. Such participation, in the case of intelligible beings, is connected to freedom, through which they might inclined towards the good or the bad according to liking (κατ' ἐξουσίαν),¹⁰⁸ thus in a certain sense placing themselves on the border between that which is good and its opposite (ἐν μεθορίῳ τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων).¹⁰⁹ The greater or lesser degree of virtue would be connected precisely to this. Yet all this is different in the ontology constituted by the Trinity:

The uncreated nature is far away from such a distinction, inasmuch as it does not have good as something acquired (οὐκ ἐπίκτητον ἔχουσα τὸ ἀγαθόν),¹¹⁰ nor does it receive moral virtue into itself by participation in some higher moral virtue, but because it is by nature what goodness is in itself, and is perceived as goodness, and is attested even by our opponents to be the fount of goodness, simple, uniform and uncompounded. It has a distinction of its own appropriate to the majesty of its nature, not thought of in terms of more and less, as Eunomius supposes.¹¹¹

Hence, the Trinity is not marked by participation, but has a peculiar ontological structure with respect to the created world. The internal differentiation that characterizes it is not founded upon a greater or lesser degree of being, but on the distinction of person:

Rather, being thought of as in utter perfection and incomprehensible transcendence, it possesses unconfused and clear differentiation through

καὶ τὸ ἦττον ἐν τῇ κτίσει γνωρίζεται ἀναλόγως τῆς ἐκάστου ὁρμῆς. (CE I 274,1–275,1 [GNO I, 106,16–23]).

108 Cf. CE I 275,4 (GNO I, 106,26).

109 Cf. CE I 275,2–3 (GNO I, 106,24–25).

110 Compare the expression to ἐπίκτητον γὰρ τούτῳ [τὸ] ἀγαθὸν ἢ δικαιοσύνη καὶ οὐ φύσει, εἴ γε μὴ φύσει δίκαιοι οἱ δίκαιοι· ἢ δὲ δικαιοσύνη τῇ αὐτῆς φύσει ἀγαθόν. (Alexander of Aphrodisia, *In Aristotelis topicorum libros octo commentaria*, CAG II/2, 233,21–23).

111 ἢ δὲ ἄκτιστος φύσις τῆς μὲν τοιαύτης διαφορᾶς πόρρωθεν ἄπεστιν, ἅτε οὐκ ἐπίκτητον ἔχουσα τὸ ἀγαθὸν οὐδὲ κατὰ μετοχὴν ὑπερκειμένου τινὸς καλοῦ τὸ καλὸν ἐν ἑαυτῇ δεχομένη, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστὶ τῇ φύσει ἀγαθὸν οὐσα καὶ ἀγαθὸν νοουμένη καὶ ἀγαθοῦ πηγὴ ἀπλὴ τε καὶ μονοειδῆς καὶ ἀσύνητος καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν μαχομένων ἡμῖν μαρτυρουμένη. διαφορὰν δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἔχει τῷ μεγάλει τῆς φύσεως πρέπουσαν, οὐ πρὸς τὸ μείζον καὶ ἔλαττον θεωρουμένην, ὡς ὁ Εὐνόμιος οἶεται· (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 276,1–277,3 [GNO I, 107,4–17]).

the characteristics to be found in each of the persons (*hypostases*), being exactly the same inasmuch as they are uncreated, and singular in the special characteristics of each.¹¹²

Such an affirmation constitutes the heart of Gregory's argument, which must fulfill the obligation of indicating precisely those personal characteristics that allow for a distinguishing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit among the three of them. Gregory begins to indicate what distinguishes the first hypostasis:

The particularity attributed to each of the persons (*hypostases*) plainly and unambiguously distinguishes them from each other. Thus the Father is confessed to be uncreated and unbegotten, for he is neither begotten nor created. This being uncreated therefore he has in common with the Son and the Holy Spirit. But he is both unbegotten and Father; this is personal and incommunicable, and it is not perceived in either of the others.¹¹³

If, then, the first Person has something in common with the other two uncreated beings, the characteristic proper to him and distinctive of him is that of being ungenerated and Father. One notes how these two personal notions are placed on the same plane and distinct from the substantial properties. One then passes to the second hypostasis:

The Son is connected to the Father and the Spirit in being uncreated, but has his individuation in being, and being called, Son and Onlybegotten, which does not belong to the God over all or to the Spirit.¹¹⁴

112 ἀλλ' ἐν ἁκρᾷ τῇ τελειότητι καὶ ἐν ἀκαταλήπτῳ τῇ ὑπεροχῇ θεωρουμένη, τοῖς ἐνυπάρχουσιν ἐκάστη τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἰδιώμασιν ἀσύγχυτον καὶ διακεκριμένην τὴν διαφορὰν ἔχει, ἐν μὲν τῇ κατὰ τὸ ἄκτιστον κοινωνίᾳ τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον ἔχουσα, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἐξαιρέτοις τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ἐκάστου τὸ ἀκοινωνήτον. (CE I 277,8–13 [GNO I, 107,17–22]).

113 Ἡ γὰρ ἐπιθεωρουμένη ἐκάστη τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἰδιότης τρανῶς καὶ καθαρώς τὸ ἕτερον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐτέρου διίστησιν. ὅσον ὁ πατὴρ ἄκτιστος εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται καὶ ἀγέννητος· οὔτε γὰρ γεγέννηται οὔτε ἔκτισται· τοῦτο οὖν τὸ ἄκτιστον κοινὸν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγέννητος καὶ πατὴρ· τοῦτο ἴδιόν τε καὶ ἀκοινωνήτον, ὅπερ ἐν οὐδενὶ τῶν ὑπολοίπων καταλαμβάνεται. (CE I 278,1–279,1 [GNO I, 107,23–108,3]).

114 ὁ δὲ υἱὸς κατὰ τὸ ἄκτιστον τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι συναπτόμενος ἐν τῷ υἱὸς καὶ μονογενὴς εἶναι τε καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι τὸ ἰδιάζον ἔχει, ὅπερ οὔτε τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων θεοῦ οὔτε τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἐστί. (CE I 279,1–4 [GNO I, 108,3–6]).

Son and Onlybegotten are coupled as distinctive properties that do not characterize the Father and the Spirit, to whom instead the second Person is united in His being uncreated. But the part most granted and elaborated upon is that which is revealed by the third hypostasis, whose distinctive characteristics were object of investigation in the years prior to the Council of Constantinople and in the debate with the Macedonians:

The Holy Spirit, who has a share with the Father and the Son in the uncreated nature, is again distinguished from them by recognisable features. His feature and mark is quite uniquely to be none of those things which reason envisaged as peculiar to the Father and the Son. To be neither unbegotten nor onlybegotten, but to be in such a way as to make a whole (εἶναι δὲ ὅλως),¹¹⁵ provides his special personal difference from the others mentioned. Connected with the Father in being uncreated, he is conversely separated from the Father by not being Father as he is. His connexion with the Son in being uncreated, [and in having the cause of his existence from the God of the universe,] is not continued when it comes to the personal characteristic, since he did not come to be onlybegotten from the Father and has been manifested through the Son himself. Again, since the creation came to exist through the Onlybegotten, lest the Spirit be thought to have anything in common with it because he was manifested through the Son, the Spirit is distinguished from the creation by changelessness and immutability and by having no need of goodness from outside itself.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ It has been preferred to render the adverb ὅλως not as “certainly to be”, as Hall does, but as “to be in such a way as to make a whole”, thus rendering the parallelism with the preceding adverbs (ἀγεννήτως and μονογενῶς) that indicate the proper characteristic of the individual divine Persons.

¹¹⁶ τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐν τῷ ἀκτίστῳ τῆς φύσεως τὴν κοινωνίαν ἔχον πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῖς ἰδί-
οις πάλιν γνωρίσμασιν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν διακρίνεται. γνώρισμα γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ σημεῖόν ἐστιν ἰδιαίτατον
τὸ μηδὲν ἐκείνων εἶναι, ἅπερ ἰδίως τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ὁ λόγος ἐνεθεώρησε. τὸ γὰρ μήτε ἀγεν-
νήτως εἶναι μήτε μονογενῶς, εἶναι δὲ ὅλως, τὴν ἐξαιρέτον αὐτοῦ ιδιότητα πρὸς τὰ προειρημένα
παρίστησιν. τῷ γὰρ πατρὶ κατὰ τὸ ἄκτιστον συναπτόμενον πάλιν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τῷ μὴ πατὴρ εἶναι
καθάπερ ἐκεῖνος διαχωρίζεται. τῆς δὲ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν κατὰ τὸ ἄκτιστον συναφείας [καὶ ἐν τῷ τὴν
αἰτίαν τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὅλων ἔχειν] ἀφίσταται πάλιν τῷ ἰδιάζοντι, ἐν τῷ μήτε μονο-
γενῶς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑποστήναι καὶ ἐν τῷ δι’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ πεφηνέναι. πάλιν δὲ τῆς κτίσεως διὰ
τοῦ μονογενοῦς ὑποστάσης, ὡς ἂν μὴ κοινότητά τινα πρὸς ταύτην ἔχειν νομισθῇ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ
διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ πεφηνέναι, ἐν τῷ ἀτρέπτῳ καὶ ἀναλλοιώτῳ καὶ ἀπροσδεεῖ τῆς ἐτέρωθεν ἀγαθότητος
διακρίνεται τὸ πνεῦμα ἀπὸ τῆς κτίσεως. (CE I 279,4–281,1 [GNO I, 108,6–109,5]).

The third Person, then, is neither ungenerated like the Father nor Onlybegotten like the Son, rather has as a distinctive characteristic that of bearing the Trinity to completion.¹¹⁷ In this way Gregory explains the difference between the third Person and the created world, emphasizing how the reason behind that which does not allow the worse is singular and includes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (εἷς γὰρ καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἀνεπιδέκτων τοῦ χείρονος ὁ τοῦ ἀτρέπτου καὶ ἀναλλοιώτου λόγος).¹¹⁸

b *Response to Eunomius (282–293)*

Gregory sets in place, then, not only the basis upon which to demonstrate the incongruency of Eunomius' metaphysical analysis, but also to prove the erroneous nature of his position in light of Scripture. This section thus opens with the statement that after these premises (τούτων δὲ ἡμῖν οὕτω προειρημένων) the moment has arrived to examine the argument of his adversary.¹¹⁹ Gregory of Nyssa has engaged Eunomius' text for quite some time, which is why—more than a reference to preliminary considerations—the expression manifests an awareness of having set down the basis for being able to fully dismember the neo-Arian thought. More concretely, Eunomius' statement that "Necessity requires that the beings are greater and lesser" (ἀνάγκη φησὶ μείζους τε καὶ ἐλάττους τὰς οὐσίας εἶναι)¹²⁰ is right in Gregory's line of fire. In the fragment this claim refers to operations, but Gregory's demonstration leads to the exclusion of the possibility of separating operation from substance, in such a way that the necessity of a principle of ontological organization in hierarchy must be understood in the sense of the subordination of the second and third Persons to the first.

One thus retraces the reasoning, showing how difference cannot in any circumstance be understood in a material sense—when dealing with the intelligible—rather, it would be in regard to participation. Indeed, substance stripped of its accidents can be neither more nor less:

117 See G. Maspero, "The Fire, the Kingdom and the Glory: The Creator Spirit and the Intra-Trinitarian Processions in the *Adversus Macedonianos* of Gregory of Nyssa", in V.H. Drecoll—M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17–20 September 2008)*, Leuven 2011, 229–276.

118 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 281,7–9 (GNO I, 109,11–12).

119 Cf. *CE* I 282,1 (GNO I, 109,14).

120 Cf. *CE* I 282,2–3 (GNO I, 109,15–16).

In the case of being however it has been shown by those who are skilled in such philosophy that no difference can be predicated, if one examines it by itself in accordance with its own principle of being, stripped bare of the qualities and characteristics attributed to it.¹²¹

If the difference of the Son and the Spirit with respect to the Father were substantial—that is, if it were founded on participation and there were on an ontological borderline (ἐν μεθορίῳ)¹²²—one would not be able to say that these two are God, that *they are* in a proper sense. Indeed, iron melted by fire continues to be called iron and never fire inasmuch as it returns to its cold state when plunged in snow. So it happens with beings which are not Good itself, but only participate in it.¹²³ This argument is extremely effective from a perspective of theological reasoning, which, as one sees also in Athanasius before him, always moves from a certain soteriological principle:

How could one provide another with what it does not itself possess? If then it has it perfectly, we shall envisage no falling short in perfection, and it is vain to argue for what is less in what is perfect. If on the other hand participation in the good is deemed imperfect in them and in this respect they speak of the less, observe the consequence, that the one in this condition will not be benefactor to what is inferior, but will make efforts to fill up what it itself lacks. Thus according to them the doctrine of providence is false, as are those of judgment, of the dispensation, and of all the things which we believe were done by the Onlybegotten and are for ever done by him, since he is apparently busy attending to his own goodness and neglects the government of the universe.¹²⁴

121 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας ἐδείχθη παρὰ τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα φιλοσοφεῖν εἰδόντων μηδεμίαν δύνασθαι διαφορὰν ἐννοῆσαι, ἐάν τις αὐτὴν ψιλώσας καὶ ἀπογυμνῶσας τῶν ἐπιθεωρουμένων ποιότητων τε καὶ ιδιωμάτων αὐτὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐξετάζη κατὰ τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον. (CE I 283,1–6 [GNO I, 109,22–110,1]).

122 Cf. CE I 283,10 (GNO I, 110,5).

123 Cf. CE I 284,1–286,6 (GNO I, 110,6–111,3).

124 πῶς γὰρ ἂν τις ἐτέρῳ παράσχοι τὸ ὃ μὴ αὐτὸς ἔχει; εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείως ἔχει, οὐδεμίαν ὕφεσιν ἐπὶ τῆς τελειότητος ἐννοήσομεν, καὶ μάταιος ὁ κατασκευάζων ἐν τῷ τελείῳ τὸ ἔλαττον. εἰ δὲ ἀτελὴς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μετουσία νομίζεται καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ ἔλαττον λέγουσι, σκόπησον τὴν ἀκολουθίαν, ὅτι τὸ οὕτως ἔχον οὐχὶ τὸ ὑποδεέστερον εὐεργετήσῃ, ἀλλ' ὅπως τὸ ἑαυτῷ ἐνδέον ἀναπληρώσῃ τὴν σπουδὴν ἕξει· ὥστε ψευδὴς κατ' αὐτοὺς καὶ τῆς προνοίας ὁ λόγος καὶ τῆς κρίσεως καὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας καὶ πάντων τῶν παρὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς γεγενῆσθαι καὶ εἰσαεῖ γίνεσθαι πεπιστευμένων, ἐν τῇ περὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιμελείᾳ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἀσχολουμένου καὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἐπίστασιν διαφίεντος. (CE I 287,1–13 [GNO I, 111,4–16]).

If the Son were not God he would not have been able to save mankind and would seem to be conflicted about saving his own life, taking it for himself rather than ripping himself open to encompass all of mankind. This is based on the metaphysical principle of a Platonic tradition:

As long as he is in the lesser state, since from the goodness of its nature the superior naturally implants in those inferior a ceaseless attraction to itself, the longing for the more will never stop, but as desire continually stretches out to what is not yet achieved, what is less will always desire what is more, and will continually be changed into what is greater, and will never reach perfection, since it will never get to that end, which it must embrace to cease its ascent.¹²⁵

Yet since the good is by nature infinite, such tension would never cease making the inferior consistently unable of reaching absolute perfection.¹²⁶ In this way, there would never be under any circumstance the possibility of donation, of giving, for that would mean precisely losing that which one gives. Once again it is interesting to note how Gregory combines ontological analysis with Revelation in order to counter Eunomius' doctrine, showing how this contradicts the very essence of the Gospel. It must therefore be excluded that there is the possibility of introducing "more or less" (μειζόν τε καὶ ἔλαττον) in the divine reality,¹²⁷ thereby preserving simplicity in God. If the nature of the Father, Son and Spirit were composite, it would not be eternal in that it would have its end precisely with the dissolution of the composite (τοῦ συνθέτου διάλυσις).¹²⁸

2 Scriptural Analysis (294–316)

After having traced the ontological distinctions that have led him to confute Eunomius, Gregory attempts to show the congruency of this doctrine (δόγμα-τος)¹²⁹ with the sure criteria of truth (κριτήριον ἀσφαλές τῆς ἀληθείας)¹³⁰ constituted by the words of the Lord.

125 ἕως γὰρ ἂν ἐν τῷ ἐλάττονι ᾗ, διὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τῆς φύσεως τοῦ ὑπερκειμένου ἁπαυστόν τινα πρὸς ἑαυτὸ τὴν ὅλην τοῖς ὑποδεστέροις φυσικῶς ἐντιθέντος, οὐδενὶ τρόπῳ ἢ τοῦ πλέονος ἔφεσις στήσεται, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ μῆπω ληφθὲν ὑπερτεινομένης αἰετὶς τῆς ὀρέξεως πάντοτε τὸ ἐλαττοῦμενον τοῦ πλέονος ὀρεχθήσεται καὶ αἰετὶς πρὸς τὸ μείζον ἀλλοιωθήσεται καὶ οὐδέποτε πρὸς τὸ τέλειον φθάσει, τῷ μὴ εὐρίσκειν τὸ πέρας, οὐδ' ἀρᾶζόμενον στήσεται τῆς ἀνόδου. (CE I 290,1–8 [GNO I, 112,7–14]).

126 Cf. CE I 291 (GNO I, 112,15–20).

127 Cf. CE I 292,3–4 (GNO I, 112,23–24).

128 Cf. CE I 293,1 (GNO I, 113,6).

129 Cf. CE I 294,4 (GNO I, 113,17).

130 Cf. CE I 294,3–4 (GNO I, 113,16–17).

The subdivision of reality into the sensible and the intelligible, with a further subdivision of the intelligible being as created and uncreated—the dimension of the latter being that with which the eternal nature of the Trinity identifies itself—is not indemonstrable, rather proved by the testimony above all given in the Gospel of John (*Jn* 8:42; 16:27; 17:8) where one reads that the Lord was not created but came of the Father (ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξῆλθε).¹³¹ No testimony can be more certain than that of the *Logos* Himself, who addresses the first divine Person as *Father* and not as *Creator*, and correspondingly defines Himself as *son* and not *creature*.¹³² Indeed:

he points out by the title “Son” his true and genuine relation (σχέσιν) to the God of the universe, using the word “Son” to point to the natural intimacy.¹³³

Hence, Gregory of Nyssa confronts the typical Arian objection, one that appeals to the “I was created” (ἐκτίσθαι) in *Prov* 8:22 to claim the created nature of the second divine Person. The discussion also moves along a philological plane, through recourse to variants in the text like “he acquired” and “he placed me” instead of “He created me” (τὸ Ἐκτίσαστο καὶ Κατέστησεν ἀντὶ τοῦ Ἐκτίσεν).¹³⁴ The rapid argumentation brings him to the immediate context of the passage. References to God’s throne found in Proverbs 8:27 (Ἡνίκα ἀφώριζε τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θρόνον ἐπ’ ἀνέμων)¹³⁵ requires an interpretation of an allegorical-spiritual kind. Clearly, a merely literal reading of the text is not sufficient. Gregory’s reasoning shows how his spiritual exegesis is indeed a theological exegesis, for he reads the text beginning with Christ and the entirety of the New and Old Testaments. The “deepest spiritual meaning”, then, is sought through piety (εὐσεβῶς)¹³⁶—that is to say, through faith in Christ.

The Scriptural proof, then, moves to *Jn* 1:3. Herein one finds the claim that everything has been made by means of the Word and that without Him there is nothing of that which has been created implies that the second Person might

¹³¹ Cf. *CE* I 296,4 (GNO I, 114,4).

¹³² Cf. *CE* I 295–297 (GNO I, 113,20–114,11).

¹³³ τὴν πρὸς τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν ἀληθὴ καὶ γνησίαν σχέσιν τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ υἱοῦ διασημαίνει, τὸ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν οἰκεῖον διὰ τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ φωνῆς ἐνδεικνύμενος. (*CE* I 298,4–7 [GNO I, 114,14–17]).

¹³⁴ Cf. *CE* I 299,5 (GNO I, 115,3).

¹³⁵ Cf. *CE* I 299,12–300,1 (GNO I, 10–11).

¹³⁶ Cf. *CE* I 301,4 (GNO I, 115,14).

not have been created. In his case, the Creator would then have the same nature as the created thing.¹³⁷ Reading *Jn* 1:3 in this manner also opens up the possibility of the Spirit being able to be considered as created, as if he were part of the *everything* made through the Word. Hence, one picks up *Col* 1:16 as a fundamenteal text in maintaining the ontological distinction between visible reality—that is, what is material—and that which is invisible, or intelligible. If surely no one would reach the outrageous extreme of claiming that the Spirit is part of material creation, someone might, however, include him among that which is invisible. This is why Paul in the following verse does not list the Spirit among the celestial hierarchy.¹³⁸

Paul, I say, when he intended to teach about things created in the Lord, having listed in comprehensive terms the angelic and supernatural power, stopped his list at the ones mentioned, and did not drag into the catalogue of created things any of those above creation, so that from this it is clearly attested by what he wrote that the Holy Spirit is higher than creation.¹³⁹

According to this exegesis, one cannot counter the objection that nor does Paul cite the cherubim, who according to the proposed reasoning would also be among the beings superior to creation. Indeed, he would have included the cherubim among the throne angels, as in *Ez* 1:10 they are the ones who bear the throne of God and in *Is* 37:16 God is assisted by them once again.¹⁴⁰ In the same way, the seraphim—who in *Is* 6:3 sing the holy hymns to God—are included under the title of powers. This is based on an exegetical principle that is already seen in Basil:¹⁴¹

It is characteristic of the Holy Trinity that they are proclaimed singularly, one Father and one Son and one Holy Spirit. All those he mentions are

137 Cf. *CE* I 302–303 (GNO I, 116,1–14).

138 Cf. *CE* I 306–307 (GNO I, 117,6–19).

139 τῶν ὑπὲρ τὴν κτίσιν οὐδὲν εἰς τὸν κατάλογον τῶν κτιστῶν καθελκύσας, ὡς ἐκ τούτου σαφῶς ἄνω τῆς κτίσεως εἶναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς μαρτυρεῖσθαι. (*CE* I 308,18–21 [GNO I, 118,8–11]).

140 Cf. *CE* I 310 (GNO I, 118,19–119,1).

141 Cf. Basil, *De spiritu sancto*, XVIII, 44,18–23 and 45,24–30 (SC 17, 193 and 195) and *De fide*, PG 31, 469A. Gregory of Nyssa has recourse to μοναχῶς also in *Ad Eustathium de sancta trinitate* GNO III/1, 6,18–23 and *In Canticum canticorum*, GNO VI, 133,5. Gregory of Nazianzus uses the same adverb in connection to cherubim in *Oratio* 31,18 (SC 250, 310,16–17).

listed in the plural, principalities and authorities and lordships and powers, so as to provide no suggestion that one of them is the Holy Spirit.¹⁴²

This section thus concludes with a rapid reiteration of the arguments thus far introduced. That which faith shows to be beyond creation absolutely does not admit any diminution. Whereas Eunomius means to place boundaries around and encapsulate infinite being—and thereby mutilate divine perfection—with the statement that in the Son and in the Spirit one encounters the “greater and lesser” (τὸ μείζον καὶ τὸ ἔλαττον).¹⁴³

3 A Study of the Relationship between Works and Operations (317–385)

a *Operations and Honor* (317–340)

In light of the ontological doctrine thus far exhibited, and corroborated by Scriptural analysis, Gregory turns his attention to that which makes up the heart and soul of Eunomius’ reasoning—the necessary and bi-univocal connection between works and operations.

According to Eunomius, the possibility that a term or concept might necessarily correspond to a substance is based on the statement that “the same activities produce identical works, and varied works reveal varied activities.”¹⁴⁴

The first question tackled by Gregory of Nyssa is what it is that Eunomius means by *works*. Indeed, in the event one were to refer to creation with this term, the reasoning would say nothing in the way of the Trinity. If instead one were to call the Son and the Spirit *works*, then one must clarify to which different operations one was referring to, inasmuch as the criticism advanced by Gregory with respect to Eunomius shows how he understands operations as deprived of subsistence and disconnected from substance.¹⁴⁵

The intrinsic contradiction in Eunomius’ doctrine is evident even if by the fact that he acknowledges that Scripture reveals how various beings—heaven, for example, or angels, constellations and man—together with all other visible realities, have been created by one alone, while he asserts that the Son and

142 τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον τῆς ἀγίας τριάδος ἐστί, τὸ μοναχῶς ἐξαγγέλλεσθαι, εἰς πατὴρ καὶ εἰς υἱὸς καὶ ἐν πνεῦμα ἁγίον. τὰ δὲ εἰρημένα πάντα ἐν πλήθει κατείλεται, ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐξουσίαι καὶ κυριότητες καὶ δυνάμεις, ὡς μηδεμίαν παρέχειν ὑπόνοιαν τοῦ ἐν τούτων εἶναι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 313,5–10 [GNO I, 119,22–27]).

143 Cf. CE I 316,7 (GNO I, 121,2).

144 Cf. CE I 318,8–11 (GNO I, 121,17–21).

145 Cf. CE I 321–323 (GNO I, 122,11–123,1).

the Spirit are not works of one alone, rather the former is work of an operation that flows out of the first substance, whereas the latter is, then, work of the work who is the Son.¹⁴⁶ The reasoning is thereby incoherent, as:

To think that the same difference is to be seen in the Holy Trinity as one may perceive between heaven, which contains all creation, and the individual man, or between an angel and the star which appears in heaven, is manifestly profane. The connexion of thoughts and the sequence of the argument about this is, I say, not easy to perceive, either for me, or perhaps even for the father of the blasphemy himself.¹⁴⁷

It would be, perhaps, more logical if he were to instead state that heaven is the work of some superior operation, and that the constellations are fruit of an operation of heaven, and in the same way the angels with respect to the constellations and man with respect to the angels, for at least he would be assimilating realities that are similar to each other—that is, it is all creation belonging to the same ontological ordering. Yet, in any case, there is no sense in extending this kind of thinking to the Son and the Spirit.¹⁴⁸

Criticism of Eunomius' position on operations is immediately reflected in the topic of adoration, inasmuch as the difference between them would introduce—according to the neo-Arian—a corresponding difference in adoration. This is due in the greatest extent to highest reality and operation and therefore most ancient (*πρεσβύτερα καὶ τιμιώτερα*).¹⁴⁹ But this would imply that the operations of the Creator would have difference of dignity based on that which is accomplished in each individual case.¹⁵⁰ One would hence have to give less honor to the Son and the Spirit, who with the Father constitute the most holy Trinity.¹⁵¹ It appears blasphemous and absurd to introduce the possibility of contrast and conceive of dignity in honor being of various degrees within the Trinity. This contradicts Scripture itself, which commands that one honor the

146 Cf. *CE* I 325,1–326,1 (*GNO* I, 123,10–16).

147 τὸ μὲν γὰρ οἶσθαι τοσαύτην ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ τριάδι διαφορὰν θεωρεῖσθαι, ὅσην ἔστι κατανοῆσαι οὐρανοῦ τοῦ πάσαν τὴν κτίσιν ἐμπεριεληφότος πρὸς τὸν ἕνα τῷ ἀριθμῷ ἄνθρωπον ἢ ἀγγέλου πρὸς τὸν ἐν οὐρανῷ φαινόμενον ἀστέρα, φανεράν τὴν ἀσέβειαν ἔχει· τὸ δὲ συντεταγμένον τῶν νοημάτων καὶ ἀκόλουθον τῆς περὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο κατασκευῆς, τοῦτό φημι μήτε ἐμοὶ μήτε αὐτῷ τάχα τῷ πατρὶ τῆς βλασφημίας εὐσύννοπον εἶναι. (*CE* I 327,1–328,1 [*GNO* I, 123,22–124,6]).

148 Cf. *CE* I 328,1–10 (*GNO* I, 124,6–15).

149 Cf. *CE* I 329,5 (*GNO* I, 124,20).

150 Cf. *CE* I 330 (*GNO* I, 124,24–125,2).

151 Cf. *CE* I 332 (*GNO* I, 125,9–16).

Son as one honors the Father,¹⁵² establishing the law of the *isotimia* (τὸ ἴσον τῆς τιμῆς),¹⁵³ something that Eunomius instead erases, coming to—and one does not how—a way of measuring the honor in reality that holds the highest honor (τὰ μέτρα τοῦ πλεονάζοντος τῆς τιμῆς ἐξευρίσκων).¹⁵⁴

But with the divine nature, because all perfection in respect of goodness appears together in the designation as divine, it is not possible in our view to discover the manner of or priority in honour. Where neither greater nor lesser possession is conceived of power, glory, wisdom, kindness or any other good one can think of, but every good thing the Son has belongs to the Father, and everything the Father has is seen in the Son, by what shift shall we show the greater share of honour in the Father?¹⁵⁵

Indeed, if power and dignity are considered regal, one see that the Son possesses the prerogative of being King.¹⁵⁶ If one thinks of the power of judgment, He is Judge.¹⁵⁷ If one turns to the greatness of creation, all that has been made has been accomplished through Him.¹⁵⁸ So, too, He is the Life out of which flows the life of all mankind¹⁵⁹ and the true Light that shines in the darkness.¹⁶⁰ The implicit series of New Testament citations ends with the reference to wisdom, which 1 *Cor* 1:24 explicitly connects to Christ, the “Power and Wisdom of God”.

The importance of this ontological conversation is emphasized by the conclusion of Gregory’s thought surrounding adoration. He is opposed to a conception such as Eunomius’ which relates giving honor to certain differences and proportions in strength. Eunomius’ is in contradiction with the utter and pure

152 Cf. *Jn* 5:23.

153 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 333,5–6 (GNO I, 125,21–22).

154 Cf. *CE* I 333,9 (GNO I, 125,25).

155 ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θείας φύσεως διὰ τὸ πᾶσαν τὴν κατὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τελειότητα συνεμφαίνεσθαι τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ προσρήματι οὐκ ἔστιν εὑρεῖν κατὰ γε τὴν ἡμετέραν διάνοιαν τὸν τρόπον τῆς προτιμῆσεως, ἐν οἷς γὰρ οὐ δυνάμεως, οὐ δόξης, οὐ σοφίας, οὐ φιλανθρωπίας οὐδὲ τινος ὅλως τῆς κατὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐννοίας πλεονασμὸς ἢ ἐλάττωσις ἐπινοεῖται, ἀλλὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαθὰ, τοῦ πατρὸς ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς πάντα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καθορᾶται, πῶς διατεθέντες τὸ πλεόν τῆς τιμῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐνδειξόμεθα; (*CE* I 334,1–9 [GNO I, 126,8–16]).

156 Cf. 1 *Tm* 1:17; 6:15.

157 Cf. *Jn* 5:22.

158 Cf. *Jn* 1:3.

159 Cf. *Jn* 6:33.

160 Cf. *Jn* 1:9.

disproportion of the Christian conception of the relationship between creation and the Creator—that is love:

The reason is that human honour to the divine when correctly understood is nothing but a loving attitude (ἀγαπητική σχέσις) and the acknowledgement of the good things that belong to it, and it seems to me that the idea, that the Son must be honoured just as the Father is (cf. *Jn* 5,23), was used by the Word instead of love. It is by loving God with all the heart and strength (cf. *Mk* 12,39 par.) that the law bids us yield him honour, and in this place God the Word legislates for equality of love when he says that the Son is to be honoured just as the Father is.¹⁶¹

Such an identification of rendering honor with loving becomes the cipher of Christian doctrine, that one does not limit itself to proposing some relationship of force, but leads one to a personal relation with the three divine Persons. As the Son has the same infinite breadth of Goodness as is in the Father, one cannot but love Him in an absolute way as one loves the first divine Person. But if this holds true for love, *a fortiori* it must also hold for honor, which in Gregory is identified with love itself.¹⁶²

b *Eternity and Time* (341–366)

After having demonstrated the impossibility of introducing difference in the honor attributed to the three divine Persons, Gregory moves to the classical argument against the Arian claim that the Father chronologically speaking takes precedent over the Son. He applies the previously explained ontological doctrine to the impossibility of coming across the temporal dimension—with whatever difference that might be connected to it—in the Trinity itself. The term “more ancient” (τὸ πρεσβύτερον)¹⁶³ can only be applied in the realm of material creation, as happens in the precedence of the creation of the heavens

161 αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦτο ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη πρὸς τὸ θεῖον τιμὴ κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα νοῦν θεωρουμένη οὐδεμία τις ἄλλη ἐστὶν ἄλλ’ ἢ ἀγαπητικὴ σχέσις καὶ ἡ τῶν προσόντων αὐτῷ ἀγαθῶν ὁμολογία, καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τὸ οὕτω δεῖν τιμᾶσθαι τὸν υἱὸν ὡς ὁ πατὴρ τιμᾶται, ἀντὶ τῆς ἀγάπης ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου τετάχθαι· ὁ γὰρ νόμος ἐν τῷ ἀγαπᾶν τὸν θεόν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας καὶ δυνάμεως τὴν πρέπουσαν αὐτῷ τιμὴν ἀπονέμειν κελεύει, καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἰσοστάσιον τῆς ἀγάπης ὁ θεὸς λόγος νομοθετῶν οὕτω φησὶ δεῖν τιμᾶσθαι τὸν υἱὸν, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ τιμᾶται. (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 337,1–338,1 [GNO I, 127,2–12]).

162 Cf. *CE* I 339,4–340,3 (GNO I, 127,21–128,1).

163 Cf. *CE* I 341,1 (GNO I, 128,8).

with respect to the creation of mankind. In this case, one can identify a temporal difference and therefore how one reality takes precedence over the other. Yet this is not so for the first nature (τῆς πρώτης φύσεως) which is beyond all conception of time (χρονικὴν ἔννοιαν) and beyond all possible comprehension (ἐπίνοιαν καταληπτικὴν).¹⁶⁴

Indeed, to say that the Father is more ancient than the Son would imply a clear contradiction, for John says that all things—and hence even time and temporal dimension itself—have been created precisely by means of the second divine Person and subsequent to Him.¹⁶⁵ The difficulties do not end here, rather extend to the Father as well, for if the Son has begun to be, to exist, then so, too, the Father would have had to come into existence in that very moment as the person of the Father (καὶ τῷ πατρὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ὀρίσει τῆς ὑποστάσεως).¹⁶⁶

To speak of the life of the first Person as more ancient than that of the Son requires the introduction of some period, or temporal extension, (διαστήματι) between the two.¹⁶⁷ Yet such an intermediate interval (τὸ διὰ μέσου διάστημα)¹⁶⁸ would have to be necessarily either infinite or limited.¹⁶⁹ If such an interval were infinite, one would thereby lose the notion of Father and Son (τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τε καὶ υἱοῦ ἔννοιαν)¹⁷⁰ in that their relation would not hold up. Even the concept of an intermediate excludes that there be in all of this an infinity unlimited both towards on high—from the side of the Father—as well as towards below—from the side of the Son. One would thus define infinity:

The concept of the infinite is just that, to extend by nature in all directions and to be circumscribed by no limit whatever.¹⁷¹

The difference between the Father and the Son, then, must certainly according to things be finite, if one wishes to preserve the truth in their denomination.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁴ Cf. CE I 341,7–8 (GNO I, 128,14–15).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. CE I 342 (GNO I, 128,17–22).

¹⁶⁶ Cf. CE I 343,8 (GNO I, 128,28).

¹⁶⁷ Cf. CE I 344,3 (GNO I, 129,2).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. CE I 344,5 (GNO I, 129,4).

¹⁶⁹ The formula διὰ μέσου διάστημα emerges only in *Contra Eunomium* I (a second instance in 350,3; GNO I, 130,16) and in Oribasius, medical doctor of Julian the Apostate and Gregory's contemporary: Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae* 48, 62, 2,7; 48, 20, 14,2 and 13,2.

¹⁷⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 345,2–3 (GNO I, 129,6–7).

¹⁷¹ αὕτη γὰρ τοῦ ἀπείρου ἢ ἔννοια, τὸ πανταχόθεν ἐκκεχύσθαι τῇ φύσει καὶ μηδενὶ πέρατι μηδαμόθεν περιλαμβάνεσθαι. (CE I 345,7–346,1 [GNO I, 129,11–13]).

¹⁷² Cf. CE I 346,1–2 (GNO I, 129,13–14).

But if it were so, the God who is beyond the universe would still not be of eternity, but only have begun to be in some specific moment.¹⁷³

As in the case of time periods that separate various events—for example, the creation of mankind or the promise made to Abraham as narrated in Scripture—so too, the difference between the life of the Father and that of the Son would have a measurable extension, similar to what happens with two rulers of different lengths, balancing two extremes and computing their different measures.¹⁷⁴

But if this is applied to a presumed difference between the life of the Father and that of the Son, given that one cannot conceive of an infinite interval between these two, one arrives at the unsettling result that neither is the Father ungenerated—in contradiction to the fundamental element of Arian theology. If the life of the Son is limited and that of the Father claims difference from the Son's life only by a finite interval, then even the life of the Father will be somehow limited, excluding any being void of a beginning and thereby ungenerated.¹⁷⁵ The conclusion is persuasive:

For the one who has a beginning of existence is not unbegun. But if it is in every way correct to confess the Father as unbegun, let there be no fiddling about with a fixed point for the life of the Son, from which he began to exist and is cut off from life beyond that point. It is enough to attribute priority to the Father over the Son solely in the matter of causation (κατὰ μόνον τὸν τῆς αἰτίας λόγον), and not think of the life of the Father as once separate and private before the begetting of the Son. Otherwise this idea will bring in with it the concept of an interval measured before the manifestation of the Son against the life of his Begetter. The inevitable consequence will be to suggest a beginning for the life of the Father too, at which the imagined interval before the Son ceases its backwards extent, in itself defining the beginning of the presupposed life of the Father.¹⁷⁶

173 Cf. CE I 346,5–347,1 (GNO I, 129,17–19).

174 Cf. CE I 351 (GNO I, 130,24–131,5).

175 Cf. CE I 351–356 (GNO I, 130,24–132,25).

176 ὁ γὰρ ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι ἔχων ἀναρχος οὐκ ἔστιν. εἰ δὲ παντὶ τρόπῳ τὸ ἀναρχον τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμολογεῖσθαι προσήκει, μηδὲ τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ ζωῆς ὀρισμένον τι πολυπραγμονεῖσθω σημεῖον, ἀφ' οὗ τοῦ εἶναι ἀρξάμενος τῆς εἰς τὸ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ σημείου ζωῆς ἀποτέμνεται· ἀλλ' ἀρκεῖ κατὰ μόνον τὸν τῆς αἰτίας λόγον προεπινοεῖν τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ μὴ κεχωρισμένην καὶ ἰδιάζουσάν ποτε τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ζωὴν πρὸ τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ γεννήσεως, ἵνα μὴ συνεισέλθῃ τῇ ὑπολήψει ταύτῃ διαστημᾶτικόν τι νόημα πρὸ τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀναδείξεως τῇ ζωῇ τοῦ γεγεννηκότος παραμετρούμενον, ᾧ κατ'

The distinction between the Father and the Son cannot, then, be understood in temporal terms, nor can one conceive of it in terms of being more or less in any ontological dimension. The only reason for distinguishing them is causal origin alone, according to which the Father generates the Son. But this does not imply that the one generated is inferior to the one who generates, nor that the former is thereby separated from the latter. Hence, as Gregory says, clearly referencing the phrase “Light from Light” in the Nicene Creed, the Orthodox Church does not limit itself to describing the relationship between the Son and the Father, saying only that the Son is “of Him” (ἐξ αὐτοῦ), but also adding that the Son is “with Him” (σὺν αὐτῷ).¹⁷⁷

A conclusion such as this cannot be challenged by adducing the case of creation, which has a clear beginning, and is not conjoined with eternity nor constitutive of a limit to the infinity of divine life. Hence, according to an objection of this nature, as the existence of creation does not impede the eternity of the Father, so, too—if one admits that the world is not eternal—the Son could claim a beginning without it implying that the first divine Person is not eternal. Here in the background one hears the echo of Origen’s theology, which positions the Son as a proportional intermediary between the Father and the world: the first Person would be in a relationship with the second as this Person is in a relationship with creation.¹⁷⁸ But such a position would require a demonstration that one of the realities superior to creation has a temporal beginning and thus making it possible to conceive of time prior to creation itself.¹⁷⁹ The one who subscribes to the doctrine of piety holds a much different position:

All the voices of religious men however confess that all beings exist either through creation or before creation, and that the divine nature is according to the faith uncreated, and in it the doctrine of religion teaches that one has existence as cause, the other as caused, without any separation, whereas creation is thought of in terms of temporal extent. All temporal order therefore and sequence of things generated is apprehended by means of periods of time, while the pretemporal nature is free from dis-

ἀνάγκην ἀκολουθήσει τὸ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀρχὴν τινὰ τῆς ζωῆς ὑποθέσθαι, καθ’ ἣν τὸ ἀναπλασθὲν πρὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ διάστημα προϊὼν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνω στήσεται, συμπεριγράφων αὐτῷ τῆς προεπινοηθείσης τοῦ πατρὸς ζωῆς τὴν ἀρχήν. (CE I 356,1–357,1 [GNO I, 132,11–25]).

¹⁷⁷ CE I 357,1–3 (GNO I, 132,25–27).

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Origen, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* II, 20, 1–9; SC 120, p. 220. See also J. Daniélou, *Origène*, Paris 1948, pp. 249–258.

¹⁷⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 360,10 (GNO I, 133,26).

inctions of “senior” and “junior”, since what reason perceives as belonging to creation are not conceived as applying also to the divine and blessed life.¹⁸⁰

In this way, the temporal dimension is an extreme boundary subject to the exploration of human thought, to human beings who cannot push themselves simply by their curiosity to investigate any substance that is beyond creation, which has neither beginning nor end. Divine nature is compared to a vast ocean (πέλαγος ἀχανές),¹⁸¹ of whose origin cannot be conceived as it always escapes our reach, revealing itself to be radically exceeding the capacity of human thought.¹⁸² Hence:

It is an obvious point even to one who has modestly studied the nature of things, that nothing is commensurable with the divine and blessed life. That life is not in time, but time comes from it.¹⁸³

This ontological consideration has an immediate and grave consequence on the level of gnoseology. Indeed, at the end of his discussion, Gregory establishes apophaticism as a necessary epistemological condition for the study of Trinitarian doctrine.

c *Apophaticism* (367–385)

Even the realities belonging to the order of creation of themselves cannot be known on account of the weakness of human reasoning (τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν),¹⁸⁴ but they are defined by the power of the Creator and are enclosed within the boundaries of creation itself. Instead, the power that

180 ἐπεὶ δὲ πάσαις ταῖς τῶν εὐσεβοῦντων ψήφοις ὁμολογεῖται, ὅτι πάντων τῶν ὄντων τὸ μὲν διὰ τῆς κτίσεως ἐστὶ, τὸ δὲ πρὸ τῆς κτίσεως, καὶ ὅτι ἡ μὲν θεία φύσις ἀκτιστος εἶναι πεπίστευται, ἐν ᾗ τὸ μὲν αἴτιον, τὸ δὲ ἐξ αἰτίου τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἀδιαστάτως ἔχειν ὁ τῆς εὐσεβείας διδάσκει λόγος, τῆς δὲ κτίσεως ἐν παρατάσει τινὶ διαστηματικῇ θεωρουμένης, πᾶσα χρονικὴ τάξις καὶ ἀκολουθία τῶν γεγονότων διὰ τῶν αἰώνων καταλαμβάνεται, ἡ δὲ προαιώνιος φύσις ἐκπέφευγε τὰς κατὰ τὸ πρεσβύτερον τε καὶ νεώτερον διαφορὰς τῷ μὴ συνθεωρεῖσθαι τῇ θείᾳ τε καὶ μακαρίᾳ ζωῇ, ὅσα περὶ τὴν κτίσιν ἰδίως ὁ λόγος βλέπει. (CE I 361,1–362,1 [GNO I, 133,27–134,8]).

181 Cf. CE I 364,3 (GNO I, 134,19).

182 Cf. CE I 364,6–10 (GNO I, 134,22–26).

183 Σαφὴς δὲ ὁ λόγος καὶ τῷ μετρίως ἐπεσκεμμένῳ τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν, ὅτι τῇ μὲν θείᾳ τε καὶ μακαρίᾳ ζωῇ τὸ παραμετρούμενόν ἐστιν οὐδέν. οὐ γὰρ ἐκείνῃ ἐν χρόνῳ, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἐκείνης ὁ χρόνος. (CE I 365,1–4 [GNO I, 134,27–135,2]).

184 Cf. CE I 367,1–2 (GNO I, 135,13–14).

made all things circumscribes (περιγράφουσα)¹⁸⁵ the nature of creation, yet has nothing that might in turn contain it (τὸ περιέχον οὐκ ἔχει),¹⁸⁶ extending far beyond anything imaginable by human beings. To all this one might add that the human intellect must indeed accept the incomprehensibility and inaccessibility of the divine nature. There is no form in it, no place, size or temporal measure (οὐκ εἶδος, οὐ τόπος, οὐ μέγεθος, οὐ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ χρόνου μέτρον),¹⁸⁷ or any other element that is necessary to human thought so as to help it understand. All that exists in creation has its being in time and place (ἢ ἐν τόπῳ ἢ ἐν χρόνῳ τὸ εἶναι ἔχειν).¹⁸⁸

But the self-sufficient, eternal nature, which encompasses the things that are, is in neither space nor time, but on the unspoken principle is perceived by faith alone as before and above these things, itself of itself, measured by no ages and concurring with no times, but standing by itself and constituted in itself, with no distinction in it matching past and future, for there is nothing beside it and external to it, by whose passage one thing passes and another approaches.¹⁸⁹

The divine nature, then, is unknowable precisely because it is eternal—it is known only in its being unknowable (ἀλλ' ἐν μόνῳ τῷ μὴ δύνασθαι καταληφθῆναι γινωσκομένη),¹⁹⁰ for it is the antecedent to each and every principle (ἡ ἀνωτέρα μὲν πάσης ἀρχῆς).¹⁹¹ This is its most distinctive sign and the one most proper to it (ἰδιαίτατον γνώρισμα).¹⁹² its nature is superior to all the thought that might characterize it (τὸ παντὸς χαρακτηριστικοῦ νοήματος ὑψηλοτέραν αὐτῆς εἶναι τὴν φύσιν).¹⁹³

185 Cf. CE I 367,6 (GNO I, 135,18).

186 Cf. CE I 367,7 (GNO I, 135,19).

187 CE I 369,1–2 (GNO I, 136,1–2).

188 CE I 370,6 (GNO I, 136,13).

189 ἡ δὲ ἀπροσδεῖς καὶ αἰδῖος καὶ τῶν ὄντων ἐμπεριεκτικὴ φύσις οὐτ' ἐν τόπῳ ἐστὶν οὔτε ἐν χρόνῳ, ἀλλὰ πρὸ τούτων καὶ ὑπὲρ ταῦτα κατὰ τὸν ἄφραστον λόγον αὐτὴ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς διὰ μόνης τῆς πίστεως θεωρεῖται, οὔτε αἰῶσι παραμετρουμένη οὔτε χρόνοις συμπατατρέχουσα, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐστῶσα καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῇ καθιδρυμένη, οὔτε τῷ παρωχηκότι οὔτε τῷ μέλλοντι συνδιαιρουμένη· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστι τι παρ' αὐτὴν ἔξω αὐτῆς, οὐ παροδεύοντος τὸ μὲν τι παρέρχεται τὸ δὲ μέλλει. (CE I 371,1–372,1 [GNO I, 136,14–22]).

190 Cf. CE I 373,5–6 (GNO I, 137,5–6).

191 Cf. CE I 373,3–4 (GNO I, 137,3–4).

192 Cf. CE I 373,6 (GNO I, 137,6).

193 Cf. CE I 373,6–374,1 (GNO I, 137,6–8).

Creation differs from the Creator in substance, for it has a specific definition that expresses its nature (τὸν παραστα τικὸν τῆς φύσεως ἐπιδέχεσθαι λόγον),¹⁹⁴ without having anything in common with that from which it claims origin (οὐδὲν ἐπικοινωνοῦντα τῷ ἐξ οὗ γέγονεν),¹⁹⁵ whereas divine nature itself is outside all the characterizations that occur in nature, in such a way as makes it furthermore extraneous to all aspects of time and place. This is why one cannot speak of it in terms of *more recent* or *more ancient*.

Therefore, moving on to the consideration of the Son and the Spirit, one must conclude that these are of uncreated nature, of which one can say:

In the latter the Father is perceived as unbegotten and unbegun and for ever Father; from him directly and inseparably (κατὰ τὸ προσεχές ἀδιαστάτως) the Onlybegotten Son is simultaneously thought of with (συνεπινοεῖται) the Father; through him and with him (δι' αὐτοῦ δὲ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ), before any empty anhypostatic (ἀνυπόστατον) concept can intervene, the Holy Spirit is also immediately apprehended in close connexion (συνημμένως), not falling short of the Son as far as existence is concerned, so that the Onlybegotten might ever be thought of apart from the Spirit, but himself having the cause of his being in the God of the universe; hence he is the onlybegotten Light which shone through the True Light (cf. *Jn* 1,9), not cut off from the Father or the Onlybegotten either by interval or by otherness of nature (οὔτε διαστήματι οὔτε φύσεως ἐτερότητι).¹⁹⁶

Both the Son and the Spirit are inseparable with respect to the Father. One notes how the origin of the Spirit is conceived of from the Father but in a manner that is also conjuncted with the Son, by the coupling of the prepositions *through* and *with* (δι' αὐτοῦ δὲ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ). Eternity and correlativity come into play here: one cannot conceive of the Father without the Son—and viceversa—and one cannot think of these without the Spirit—and viceversa. Their being absolutely correlative implies their co-eternity and, then,

194 Cf. *CE* I 374,4–5 (*GNO* I, 137,11–12).

195 Cf. *CE* I 374,5–375,1 (*GNO* I, 137,12–13).

196 ἐν ᾗ πατὴρ μὲν ἀναρχὸς καὶ ἀγέννητος καὶ αἰεὶ πατὴρ νοεῖται, ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ κατὰ τὸ προσεχές ἀδιαστάτως ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς τῷ πατρὶ συνεπινοεῖται, δι' αὐτοῦ δὲ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ, πρὶν τι κενόν τε καὶ ἀνυπόστατον διὰ μέσου παρεμπεσεῖν νόημα, εὐθύς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον συνημμένως καταλαμβάνεται, οὐχ ὑστερίζον κατὰ τὴν ὑπαρξιν μετὰ τὸν υἱόν, ὥστε ποτὲ τὸν μονογενῆ δίχα τοῦ πνεύματος νοηθῆναι, ἀλλ' ἐκ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὄλων καὶ αὐτὸ τὴν αἰτίαν ἔχον τοῦ εἶναι, ὅθεν καὶ τὸ μονογενές ἐστὶ φῶς, διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ φωτός ἐκλάμψαν, οὔτε διαστήματι οὔτε φύσεως ἐτερότητι τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ τοῦ μονογενοῦς ἀποτεμνόμενον. (*CE* I 378,1–11 [*GNO* I, 138,5–15]).

obliterates the Arian position. The absence of difference in time in the nature that is before all time (ἐπὶ τῆς προαιωνίου φύσεως)¹⁹⁷ implies the absence of any difference on the level of substance (κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν διαφορά οὐδεμία)¹⁹⁸ between the divine Persons. This is why one cannot say that there was a time in which He was not, He Who is said to have Himself spoken the existence of all things (ποτέ μὴ εἶναι τὸν πᾶσι δεδωκότα τὸ εἶναι).¹⁹⁹

The essential point of Gregory's reasoning is that the eternity of the Son is thought of according to generation together with the Father's not being generated (τῇ μὲν ἀγεννησίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ τοῦ μονογενοῦς ἀϊδιότητος γεν νητῶς συνεπινοεῖται).²⁰⁰ If it were not so—as has thus far been demonstrated—one would be placing limitations on the divine life.²⁰¹ The case of creation is different in that its nature does not coincide with the nature that is both immaculate and antecedent to time (τῇ ἀκηράτῳ καὶ προαιωνίῳ φύσει).²⁰²

The correspondence between ontology and theology comes up again in a noteworthy manner at the conclusion of Gregory of Nyssa's arguments: the Father is always in glory (ἀεὶ ἔνδοξος), but his glory is the Son who is prior to time itself (δόξα δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ προαιώνιος υἱός). Hence, the glory of the Son is the Spirit of Christ who is always contemplated as together with the Son and the Father (τοῦ υἱοῦ δόξα τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀεὶ συνθεωρούμενον τῷ υἱῷ καὶ τῷ πατρί). In this way, to deny the divinity of the second and third Persons would be equivalent to denying the glory of the first Person as well.²⁰³ Eunomius, then, in his denial of the Son and the Spirit, is hereby denying the Father.

c *Final Arguments (386–437)*

Gregory returns to the expressions contained in Eunomius' fragment here under review. At the conclusion of his demonstrations, he takes up once more the claim that the same operations produce the same works, so as to reinforce the arguments found in his later examples. The operation of fire is but one—to give heat, or make hot—but the works produced by such an operation are quite numerous: to liquify bronze, to bake clay, to melt wax, to burn off the oakum, and to kill animals, with the exception of salamanders.²⁰⁴ The same can be said

197 Cf. CE I 379,1 (GNO I, 138,16).

198 Cf. CE I 379,2 (GNO I, 138,17).

199 Cf. CE I 381,5–382,1 (GNO I, 139,1–2).

200 Cf. CE I 382,1–3 (GNO I, 139,2–4).

201 Cf. CE I 382,3–383,1 (GNO I, 139,4–7).

202 Cf. CE I 383,3–4 (GNO I, 139,9–10).

203 Cf. CE I 384,8–385,3 (GNO I, 139,22–25).

204 Cf. CE I 386,6–387,5 (GNO I, 140,8–16).

of the sun, which heats everything in its rays but also urges forward both the life and death of various entitites—it dries out the plants on the rocks while brings those with deep roots to fruition.²⁰⁵ Yet again, one can say this of conception, of suckling or of the arts—operations give rise to an extreme variety and wealth of phenomena.²⁰⁶

Indeed, the argument should revolve around Eunomius himself, for—if the Son and the Spirit were works of the Father—the identity of power between the divine Persons would reveal, precisely, the identity of the substance produced (τὴν ταυτότητα πάντως τῆς ἀποτελεσθείσης οὐσίας)²⁰⁷ as well as that of the one who produced it. The universe itself gives witness to this inasmuch as it originates with God's command, which by this would be made to be uniform (μονοειδή)²⁰⁸ if the identity of works were to have followed a single operation. The diversity of the universe in itself is an answer to Eunomius, a man whose reasoning is like the dreams and fantasies of drunkenness (τῶν ὀνείρους ἢ μύθους παρὰ πότον διηγουμένων).²⁰⁹

The same conclusion must hold for the claim that the bond one encounters between the works must correspond to that which exists between the Persons. The point is precisely the reason behind the distinction in the Trinity, a distinction that Eunomius seems to conceive of in a material way, like buckets that fit together one inside the other.²¹⁰

The connection between the works and the Persons would be, according to Eunomius, connatural and thus fixed adhering to the laws of necessary proportion that connect the various substances of a descending ontological degree—again, which have origin in a sequence, one coming from the one before—beginning with the first in the ordering. However, Gregory's demonstration proves that all of this is contradictory. The fundamental difference at the basis of his argument is that between connatural operations that cannot be other than they are, and voluntary operations that may or may not unfold,

205 Cf. CE I 387,6–388,3 (GNO I, 140,18–22).

206 Cf. CE I 389–393 (GNO I, 140,26–141,29).

207 Cf. CE I 398,5–6 (GNO I, 143,7–8).

208 Cf. CE I 401,1–2 (GNO I, 143,22–23).

209 Cf. CE I 404,12–405,1 (GNO I, 144,26–27).

210 ἢ ὅτι ἐλάττους τε καὶ μείζους αἱ οὐσίαι νοοῦνται διὰ τὸ ἐγκείσθαι πῶς ἀλλήλαις καὶ περιέχεσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς εὐρυχωροτέρας τὴν ἡσσονα, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν κάδων συμβαίνει τῶν ἀλλήλοις ἐντιθεμένων, καθ' ὃ μείζους τε καὶ ἐλάττους ἐνορᾷ τὰς οὐσίας τὰς οὐδενὶ πέρατι καὶ ὄρω περιειλημμένας; (CE I 410,4–411,1 [GNO I, 146,10–15]).

There is certainly a vast difference between what is done deliberately and what comes about automatically by some natural necessity. Heat is a natural property of fire, luminosity of the sunbeam, fluidity of water, gravity of stone, and one could mention many similar instances. But if someone builds a house, or seeks office, or starts trading, or undertakes anything else that is achieved by forethought and preparation, one cannot in that case say any “order inherent” applies to what is done by them. The order comes about from the particular actions done to suit what the planner determines and what promotes the business in hand.²¹¹

So, Eunomius having stated that the Son and the Spirit are both works of the Father, this means that they are works accomplished in arbitrary will, and not according to a nature (τὰ ἔργα προαιρέσεως, οὐ φύσεως ἀποτελέσματα),²¹² and in such a way that being the work of the will (τοῦ θελήματος ἔργον)²¹³ precisely excludes connatural ordering (συμφυῆ τάξιν).²¹⁴

If God the Father is truly perfect, generation would have perfectly communicated His greatness to the Son, unless one thinks the Father was or is afraid of losing his own glory and honor, thereby attributing jealousy to the holy and divine nature.²¹⁵

One thus reaches the ontological nucleus of the question: the hierarchical conception based on the ontological difference that Eunomius maintains to be present in the Trinity. Gregory condemns this, because if one does not reject such a conception with respect to the three divine Persons, one would be unable to distinguish God from the world. In a neo-Arian understanding, operations are the elements of mediation between a superior substantial level and one inferior to it, according to an connatural ordering that is conceived of precisely as a descending scale of ontology.

211 πλείστον γὰρ δήπου διενήνοχε τῶν τε ἐκ προβουλεύσεως καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸ αὐτόματον ἐκ φυσικῆς τιнос ἀνάγκης ἀποβαινόντων τὸ πέρας. συμφυῆς ἐστὶ τῷ πυρὶ ἡ θερμότης καὶ ἡ λαμπηδὼν τῇ ἀκτίνι καὶ τὸ ῥέειν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ τῷ λίθῳ ἡ ἐπὶ τὸ κάτω φορὰ καὶ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα ἔστιν εἰπεῖν. εἰ δέ τις οἰκίαν ἐδομήσατο ἢ μετέλθεν ἀρχὴν ἢ ἐμπορίαν ἐστείλατο ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἐκ προβουλεύσεως καὶ παρασκευῆς κατορθουμένων μετεχειρίσατο, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπὶ τούτου κυρίως λέγειν ὅτι συμφυῆς τις τοῖς παρ’ αὐτοῦ πεπραγμένοις ἔπεστι τάξις· κατὰ γὰρ τὸ βούλημα τοῦ προαιρουμένου καὶ κατὰ τὸ χρῆσιμον τοῦ ἐπιτελουμένου πράγματος ἡ τάξις παρὰ τῶν τὰ καθ’ ἕκαστον ἐνεργούντων ἐπάγεται. (CE I 414,3–416,1 [GNO I, 147,15–27]).

212 Cf. CE I 416,7–8 (GNO I, 148,3–4).

213 Cf. CE I 416,8 (GNO I, 148,4).

214 Cf. CE I 416,8–9 (GNO I, 148,4–5).

215 Cf. CE I 418,1–8 (GNO I, 148,18–25).

Gregory contests the possibility of this, for after having proposed several arguments on the issue of the relationship between substance and operations, he asks whether it might be possible to deduce inferiority in the status of the substance of the Son, when “substance and operation are found in selfsame Son and identical signs of recognition and properties” (τῆς οὐσίας καὶ ἐνεργείας ἐν τοῖς ἴσοις καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς γνωρίσμασί τε καὶ ἰδιώμασιν εὕρισκομένων).²¹⁶ The point is that the definitions of substance and operation are not the same (οὐχ ὁ αὐτὸς τῆς τε οὐσίας καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας ὁ λόγος),²¹⁷ in such a way that one cannot trace backwards to the one who operates through the work, moving thus from the bottom towards the top. Here the critique takes on a ferociously ironic tone. If one were to define the substance of man in the classical manner of him being an animal capable of laughing,²¹⁸ it would be absurd to want to demonstrate this adducing his capacity to construct a house or a ship, claiming that such an activity would necessarily lead to the above definition of substance.²¹⁹ In the same way, one cannot define the nature of the wind by looking at the sand or the straw that it blows off the ground.²²⁰ Hence, here emerges Gregory's biting question:

Why then does he show the beings by the activities, and present his account of the being of that which is, on the basis of what has been done by that which is?²²¹

According to Eunomius the Son is the work of the Father and is commensurate with the operation that produced Him (τῇ ἐργασαμένη αὐτὸν ἐνεργείᾳ παραμετρούμενος).²²² This would mean, however, that the work would lead one only to the knowledge of the operation itself and never the nature of the agent. One can only deduce quantity and not substance from the work, as in the case of a blacksmith that makes a drill and utilizes it in a way that will create the particular work he desires, yet this act is not demonstrative of the full capacity of the agent. This, then, would not correspond to the question of substance, but

²¹⁶ Cf. *CE* I 419,6–420,1 (GNO I, 149,1–3).

²¹⁷ Cf. *CE* I 420,1–2 (GNO I, 149,1–2).

²¹⁸ Cf. Aristotele, *De partibus animalium*, III, 10, 637a8–e28.

²¹⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I, 420,1–421,1 (GNO I, 149,3–13).

²²⁰ Cf. *CE* I 422,1–4 (GNO I, 149,19).

²²¹ πῶς οὖν οὗτος ταῖς ἐνεργείαις τὰς οὐσίας δείκνυσι καὶ τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὄντος ἐκ τῶν γενομένων παρὰ τοῦ ὄντος παρίστησιν; (*CE* I 422,5–8 [GNO I, 149,23–26]).

²²² Cf. *CE* I 423,5–6 (GNO I, 150,3–4).

only to that of the quantity of the operation (τὸ ποσὸν τῆς ἐνεργείας).²²³ This argument, then, extends to the Holy Spirit as well, and serves it all with a final touch:

Let us nevertheless concede this, too; let it be granted that the beings are known by the activities. Then the first being is recognized through the work it produces, and in the same way the work that comes from it reveals the second. So tell me, my scientific friend, what reveals the third, since no such work of the third being is to be observed. If the beings are apprehended, as you say, by their activities, you will allow that the being of the Spirit is incomprehensible, since you cannot go a stage further, invoking a similar activity for him and from that deducing the nature of the Spirit. Either show us a substantive work of the Spirit, by which you claim to apprehend the being of the Spirit, or else your whole spider-web will collapse on contact with reason. If the being is recognized by the subsequent activity as your argument says, and there is no substantive work of the Spirit, as you allege the Son is of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, the being of the Spirit is thereby acknowledged to be quite unascertainable and incomprehensible, since no activity that can be concretely (καθ' ὑπόστασιν) thought of allows a glimpse of it.²²⁴

From this point onwards, Eunomius' arguments are turned against him, for the necessary hierarchical connection—which he maintains is a connection of the various substances of the divine Persons—now leads to the conclusion that the Son is not knowable if there is an absence of an operation that renders note of

223 Cf. *CE I* 424,1–425,3 (*GNO I*, 150,7–18).

224 "Ἴνα δὲ καὶ τοῦτο συγχωρήσωμεν, δεδόσθω ταῖς ἐνεργείαις τὰς οὐσίας γινώσκεισθαι. οὐκοῦν ἡ πρώτη οὐσία διὰ τοῦ ἐξ αὐτῆς ἔργου γνωρίζεται καὶ τὴν δευτέραν ὡσαύτως τὸ ἔργον τὸ παρ' αὐτῆς γενόμενον δείκνυσι. τὴν τρίτην τοῖνον εἰπέ, ὦ σοφώτατε, τί τὸ δεικνύον ἐστί, μηδενὸς ἔργου τοιοῦτου τῆς τρίτης οὐσίας θεωρουμένου. εἰ γὰρ ταῖς ἐνεργείαις, ὡς σὺ φῆς, αἱ οὐσίαι καταλαμβάνονται, ἀκατάληπτον εἶναι τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος φύσιν ὁμολογήσεις, οὐκ ἔχων κατὰ τὸ προσεχές τοιαύτην ἐνέργειαν καὶ τούτου παραστησάμενος δι' ἐκείνης τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος φύσιν ἀναλογίσασθαι. ἢ τοῖνον δείξόν τι οὐσιώδες ἔργον τοῦ πνεύματος, δι' οὗ κατελιγμέναι φῆς τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ πνεύματος, ἢ ὅλος ὁ μὲν ὁ ἴστος τῆς ἀράχνης τῇ ἐπαφῇ τοῦ λόγου περιρρυήσεται. εἰ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς προσεχούς ἐνεργείας ἡ οὐσία γνωρίζεται κατὰ τὸν ὑμέτερον λόγον, ἐνέργεια δὲ οὐσιώδης τοῦ πνεύματος οὐδεμία, καθάπερ τοῦ πατρὸς μὲν τὸν υἱόν, τοῦ δὲ υἱοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα φατε, ἀνεπίγνωτος πάντως ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος φύσις καὶ ἀκατάληπτος διὰ τούτων συνωμολόγηται, μηδεμιᾶς αὐτὴν ἐνεργείας τῆς καθ' ὑπόστασιν νοουμένης παραδηλούσης. (*CE I* 426,1–428,1 [*GNO I*, 150,25–151,15]).

the Spirit in his presumed substance. Thus, if the Son is not knowable neither is the Father: this is a kind of checkmate to the identification of his substance with *non-generation*.²²⁵

All of this also renders as totally in vain any pretense to solve the ambiguity surrounding substance through an appeal to operations, for if substance were understood intellectually it would not be necessary to turn to operation. None would then come to be known because both the point of departure and that of arrival in the investigation would be obscure.²²⁶

One cannot go forward in knowledge of the one and triune God by way of created works since there are differing opinions as to what the substance of heaven is, for example. If such knowledge is ambiguous (ἀμφιβαλλομένης), clearly one cannot think of reaching the Creator of heaven in this way, the Creator who is immaterial, invisible, figureless, ungenerated, eternal, and not subject to any corruption or change whatsoever (ἄυλος ἀόρατος ἀσχημάτιστος ἀγέννητός τε καὶ εἰσαεὶ διαμένων, φθορᾶς καὶ τροπῆς καὶ ἀλλοιώσεως).²²⁷

Eunomius cannot move from contraries (τῶν ἐναντίων) and dialectically know the invisible from the visible, nor likewise the incorruptible from what is corruptible or the ungenerated from what exists in time (ἐκ τοῦ ἀοράτου τὸ ὁρατόν, ἐκ τοῦ ἀφθάρτου τὸ φθορᾷ ὑποκείμενον, ἐκ τοῦ ἀγεννήτως ὄντος τὸ ἀπὸ χρόνου τὴν σύστασιν ἔχον). The metaphysical background of this doctrine seems evident, if one re-reads the texts by Aristotle and Porphyry at pp. 452ff (section A.1.c). This holds true for the temporal and the eternal as well.²²⁸ Rather, it is precisely generation that implies the same nature of the Father and the Son.

The reference made to dialectic knowledge reveals itself to be of the utmost importance, for it would be possible where the relationship between God and the world is configured according to a single ontology of descending degree, whose different levels are connected to each other in a necessary way. The Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions are marked by dualism, between the One and the Dyad in the first case, and between act and potency in the second. In this way man's knowledge would be able to scale the ontological chain, from bottom to top, passing from what is less to what is more. Neoplatonism joins both Platonic and Aristotelian threads, but the monism that results is left marked by this graduated ontology. This was the metaphysical *koiné* of the time, which was inclined to structure the Trinity according to this schematic. There-

225 Cf. CE I 428,1–429,1 (GNO I, 151,15–25).

226 Cf. CE I 431,1–433,1 (GNO I, 152,7–18).

227 Cf. CE I 435,4–436,1 (GNO I, 153,7–14).

228 Cf. CE I 436,3–437,1 (GNO I, 153,16–21).

fore, apophaticism reveals itself to be an essential element in any estimation of the doctrine of the one and triune God: divine immanence can be known exclusively through the self-revelation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who reach us through truly personal relationships.

IV Conclusion

Gregory provides a critical analysis of Eunomius' fragment, emphasizing the philosophical contradictions interwoven throughout his doctrine. The process takes the form of a roundtrip, like waves of the sea coming and going on the shore. In the first phase Gregory lets fall the full force of a rigorous ontological argument, one that reveals the incoherency of Eunomius with respect to common notions. He then moves to Sacred Scripture and back to the fragment in light of this, dragging away as it were the crumbling rock by way of presenting a new ontological construction. This is shown to be an extension of classical ontology, which does not stand in contradiction to it, rather is able to take into consideration new revealed data.

With extreme economy, the line of Gregory's argument moves from a consideration of the fact that Eunomius names the three divine Persons *substances*, thereby avoiding proper names which express their reciprocal relations. Hence, speaking in a Trinitarian vein, Gregory first defends the divinity of the Son, tying Eunomius' statement that only the Father can claim the title of being "highest and most authentic" to the intention of denying the divinity of the second Person. Gregory here examines the concept of submission, moving it to the realm of the third Person, through whom it is easier to bring the conversation into the sphere of divine immanence. After having undertaken a study of the three divine Persons, the argument moves to their relationships and, hence, operations, which cannot be confused with substances. Rather, in the Trinity, operations must be understood as immanent on account of divine simplicity. This yields a formulation of the personal distinction of the Father, of the Son and of the Spirit, with an explicit articulation of their distinctive characteristics, in which being *non-generated* is utterly united to and inseparable from the first's being *Father*, as for the second Person his being *Onlybegotten* is to his being *Son*. The personal characteristic of the Spirit is individuated in his bearing the Trinity to completion, its wholeness—that is, in the very unity of the Father and the Son. This is the heart and apex of the argument, which then leads to the rejection of any possibility of attributing to God a kind of more or less, and thereby excluding all sense of subordination. One comes to apophaticism through a threefold passage, which passes along a latreutic dimension to

a consideration of the eternity of the three divine Persons, concluding with the impossibility of grasping the nature itself of the Trinity.

The whole of Gregory's argument, then, rests on two things: the names of the three divine Persons and their being co-relative. His conclusion is a demonstration of the impossibility of uniting two incompatible ontological conceptions, which Eunomius seems to try to keep together. Revelation introduces a principle of absolute discontinuity between God and the world, one that excludes any hierarchical nexus and any necessary link between what now configures itself as two ontologies that are absolutely distinct. Yet Eunomius tries to combine a descending and subordinated conception of the three divine Persons with a creationist's understanding of the relationship between God and the world. He thus merges two incompatible conceptions to reach ontological absurdity: the Greek theology of gradation and the distinction in different natures—the first being eternal and all that follow being marked by participation—which characterizes the authentic doctrine of the Trinity and of creation.

Schesis can be considered the *fil rouge* throughout the Trinitarian argumentation of the *Contra Eunomium* I, in that the conversation pivots on precisely how this is interpreted. That is, in an immanent sense, as according to Gregory, that thus modifies classical ontology by inserting *schesis* into the immanence of the divine substance and moving it beyond its mere Aristotelian categorization as accident; or, in Eunomius' sense of graduated metaphysics, which with the reciprocal *schesis* poses his reason for connatural and descending ordering that distinguishes the three divine Persons.²²⁹

Gregory's theology seems extremely attentive to his day as well, for he demonstrates himself to have a better grasp of the philosophy of his time than did Eunomius himself. His criticism unfolds first on an ontological plane, and only secondarily does he underline in what manner Trinitarian Revelation requires an extension of classical notions. The very same Trinitarian theology cannot, then, be conceived of as a discipline radically distant from ontology, for if the Being of which both Plato and Aristotle speak is truly Trinitarian, then the world itself must be able to be contemplated in light of it, revealing traces of its origin to all mankind, even to he or she who does not know the Trinity as such. Theology, then, must respond to the demands of philosophical critique and cannot avoid dialogue with ontological research, even of those who do not have faith.

229 The notion of *schesis* is worthy of more specific analysis, as one sees as well in the work of Ilaria Vigorelli in the present volume.

Perhaps the essential point to make this dialogue a reality is a shared epistemology that includes the apophatic dimension. One reaches the necessity of this shared premise through an examination of reality, without any preconceived notions and free of close-mindedness.

Apophaticism, from a theological perspective, is none other than the gnoseological translation of the new understanding of the Highest Being as the Trinity of Persons, united in an absolute way in their reciprocal relations through which They are the one and indivisible divine nature. The essential role played by the names of the Father, of the Son and of the Spirit is connected precisely to the relational value that distinguishes one from the other. Hence, the height of his confutation, and indeed of the whole work, is the definition of the personal characteristics of each of the divine Persons.

It seems important to emphasize in this work of theological clarification the role played by the Holy Spirit, both in Gregory's thought as well as in his concrete treatise against Eunomius' fragment. It is precisely through a reflection on his Person that the strongest argument against Eunomius emerges. This correlation between apophaticism and the development of the theological thought surrounding the third Person is met with again at the end of the very same *Contra Eunomium I* (685–691): the end of his treatment of topics touched upon in the other fragments is the same as the initial text, here analyzed.²³⁰

The fruit of such theology is later taken up by the Council of Constantinople and remains a precious treasure in the Church that adores the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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230 In the second fragment, only partially reconstructed, Gregory examines the relationship between the manner of generation and the manner of likeness (439–473); in the third fragment there is a discussion of how the Father and Son cannot be understood as two principles ungenerated through the uniqueness of the divine nature, wherein their distinction remains at a purely hypostatic level (474–534); in the fourth fragment the bishop of Nyssa returns to the impossibility of placing "ungenerated" ahead of the name Father, the latter indicating both relation as well as it being causal antecedent, and also takes up once more the conversation of the subordination of the third Person and the ontological division of reality (535–651); lastly, the final fragment analyzes the relationship between the names of God and the divine substance (652–691).

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Gott Vater nach dem ersten Buch gegen Eunomius des Gregor von Nyssa*

Lenka Karfíková

Hauptziel der Polemik gegen Eunomius, die Gregor nach dem Tode seines Bruders Basilius fortsetzte,¹ ist es seinen Worten nach, die Vorstellung von Sohn und Geist als geschaffene, dem wahren Gott untergeordnete Wesen abzuwenden.² Nichtsdestotrotz bleibt auch die Person des Vaters in dieser Polemik nicht vollkommen abseits. In diesem Beitrag versuche ich, die Position beider Seiten sowie ihr gegenseitiges Missverstehen darzustellen, soweit es gerade diese letzte Frage betrifft. Ich werde dabei in drei Schritten verfahren, die vom Entwurf des Eunomius ausgehen und auch Gregors Polemik bestimmen, nämlich (I) drei Wesen, (II) ihre Aktivitäten und (III) ihre Namen, und zwar sowohl in Zitaten aus Eunomius' zweiter Apologie (*Apologie der Apologie*) als auch in Gregors Antwort.

Wesen, Aktivitäten und Namen laut Eunomius

(I) Ein großer Teil der Polemik Gregors im ersten Buch gegen Eunomius setzt sich mit einer Passage auseinander, die in der Jäger-Ausgabe in den Paragraphen 151–154 aufgeführt ist.³ Eunomius unterscheidet hier (1) „das höchste Wesen im eigentlichen Sinne“ (ἡ ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριωτάτῃ οὐσίᾳ),⁴ (2) ferner ein Wesen, „das durch dieses existiert und nach ihm den Vorrang vor allen anderen innehat“, und zuletzt (3) ein drittes, „das ihnen auf keinen Fall ebenbürtig ist, sondern dem einen untergeordnet im Hinblick auf die Ursache (διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν), dem anderen im Hinblick auf die Aktivität (διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν), dank derer es entstanden ist“.⁵ Eunomius ordnet das erste Wesen also deutlich sowohl dem

* This study is a result of the research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR P401/12/G168 “History and Interpretation of the Bible”.

1 Zum Verlauf der Polemik vgl. J.-A. Röder, *Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium 1,1–146 (eingeleitet, übersetzt und kommentiert)*, Frankfurt a. M. 1993, 40–72.

2 CE I 220 (GNO I, 90,20–24).

3 CE I 151–154 (GNO I, 71,28–73,15).

4 CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,1f.). Zum Ausdruck ἀνωτάτω vgl. F. Mann, „Das Vokabular des Eunomius im Kontext Gregors“, *vid. supra*, 205–210.

5 CE I 151 (GNO I, 71,28–72,7): Πᾶς ὁ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς δογμάτων συμπληροῦται λόγος ἐκ τε τῆς ἀνωτάτω

zweiten über, das von dem ersten als von seiner Ursache abhängt, als auch dem dritten, das (außer dem Verhältnis der Verursachung im Hinblick auf das erste Wesen) auch dem zweiten Wesen untergeordnet ist, da es durch dessen Aktivität begründet wurde.

(11) Ferner erfahren wir aus Eunomius' Erklärung, dass die angeführten drei Wesen von ihren Aktivitäten (ἐνέργειαι) begleitet werden, die ihnen entsprechende „Wirkungen“ oder „Werke“ (ἔργα) entstehen lassen. Von der Differenzierung und der Abstufung dieser Wirkungen können wir auf dieselbe Differenzierung und Abstufung der Aktivitäten, die ihnen Entstehung geben, schließen.⁶ Es ist überhaupt eine gute Regel, betont Eunomius, „die die Wesen betreffenden Kontroversen ... auf Grundlage der ersten Aktivitäten, die den Wesen zukommen (ἐκ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προσεχῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργειῶν), und Unklarheiten betreffs der Aktivitäten auf Grundlage der Wesen zu lösen“.⁷

Die Verschiedenartigkeit der Aktivitäten, die sich in der Mannigfaltigkeit der Wirkungen zeigt, dokumentiert Eunomius anhand der unterschiedlichen geschaffenen Dingen (Engel, Sterne und Himmel, Mensch), die seiner Überzeugung nach ebenfalls durch Wirkung verschiedener Aktivitäten entstanden sind.⁸ Diesem Modell nach folgert er wohl, dass – wenn die Trinität aus drei verschiedenen Wesen besteht – die Aktivitäten, durch die die beiden letzten begründet werden, verschieden sein müssen. Das zweite Wesen verdankt seine Entstehung der Aktivität des ersten Wesens, das selbst „ohne Anfang“ existiert, das dritte sodann geht nicht nur aus dem ersten als aus seiner Ursache hervor, sondern wurde unmittelbar durch die Aktivität des zweiten Wesens geschaffen. Ohne abgestufte Aktivitäten würden die Wesen (ihrer Wirkungen) nicht als verschiedene existieren; und diese Aktivitäten wären wohl nicht verschieden, wenn sie nicht von unterschiedlichen Wesen ausgehen würden. Dieses letzte Argument führt Eunomius nicht ausdrücklich an, wenngleich es der Sinn seiner gesamten Überlegung zu sein scheint.⁹ Es handelt sich freilich um ein Argument, das sich im Kreis dreht, da die Verschiedenheit der Wesen, die bewiesen

καὶ κυριωτάτης οὐσίας καὶ ἐκ τῆς δι' ἐκείνην μὲν οὐσης μετ' ἐκείνην δὲ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων πρωτεύουσας καὶ τρίτης γε τῆς μηδεμιᾶ μὲν τούτων συνταττομένης, ἀλλὰ τῇ μὲν διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν, τῇ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν καθ' ἣν γέγονεν ὑποταττομένης.

6 CE I 151–152 (GNO I, 72,8–20).

7 CE I 154 (GNO I, 73,8–13).

8 CE I 153 (GNO I, 72,20–73,3).

9 Eine ähnliche Argumentation legt Eunomius an anderer Stelle vor, vgl. *Apol.* 20,13–27 (SC 305, 274–276).

werden soll, gleichzeitig seine Voraussetzung ist.¹⁰ Um welchen Typ von Verschiedenheit es sich beim Ausgangspunkt und beim Schluss des Arguments handelt, wird dabei nirgends erklärt. Zudem ist bei dem dritten Wesen unklar, was seine „erste Aktivität“ gewesen sein soll.¹¹

Das Problem besteht auch darin, dass sich Eunomius' Beispiel, das die Verschiedenartigkeit der geschaffenen Dinge betrifft, die von verschiedenen Aktivitäten zeugt, nicht ohne Weiteres auf drei Wesen übertragen lässt. Im Falle verschiedener Aktivitäten, die unterschiedliche geschaffene Dinge entstehen lassen, geht es nämlich offenbar um verschiedene Aktivitäten, die aus ein und demselben Wesen hervorgehen.¹² Eunomius selbst spricht von deren Träger im Singular: „Es ist deshalb nicht angebracht zu sagen, dass er dank ein und derselben Aktivität Engel, Sterne und den Himmel und auch den Menschen geschaffen hat (ἐποίησεν) ...“¹³ Das Subjekt dieses Satzes geht aus dem Kontext nicht klar hervor und auch Eunomius' voraufgehende Auslegung (sofern sie Gregor vollständig zitiert) erhellt nicht, um welches Wesen es sich eigentlich handelt (oder ob sich das Subjekt in „Gott“ verwandelt, wie ich in der deutschen Übersetzung des Satzes voraussetze). Aus anderen Äußerungen des Eunomius erfahren wir, dass die schöpferische Aktivität von dem ersten Wesen durch das zweite oder von dem zweiten im Auftrag des ersten ausführt wird, weshalb beide als „Schöpfer“ bezeichnet werden können.¹⁴

10 Wie Gregor anmerkt, wäre es auch möglich, mit diesem Argument die Identität (τὴν αὐτότητα) des Wesens zu zeigen, vgl. *CE I* 397–398 (*GNO I*, 142,23–143,8).

11 Auf dieses Problem weist Gregor zugleich hin, um daraus abzuleiten, dass keine der Wesen zu erkennen ist, vgl. *CE I* 426–428 (*GNO I*, 150,25–151,25).

12 Auf dieses Problem macht auch Gregor aufmerksam (*CE I* 325, *GNO I*, 123,10–16), der gleichzeitig anführt, dass der Himmel doch nicht das Werk Gottes sein kann, die Sonne das Werk des Himmels, der Mond das Werk der Sonne, die Sterne Werk des Mondes usw. (*CE I* 213, *GNO I*, 88,28–89,3; ähnlich *CE I* 328, *GNO I*, 124,6–11). Zur Unangemessenheit des Beispiels siehe auch *CE I* 321 (*GNO I*, 122,13–19); *CE I* 326 (*GNO I*, 123,16–20). Dieselbe Aktivität (z. B. Feuer) ruft zudem verschiedene Wirkungen hervor, vgl. *CE I* 386–387 (*GNO I*, 140,10–17).

13 *CE I* 153 (*GNO I*, 72,20–23).

14 In einem seiner Bekenntnisse führt Eunomius als „Schöpfer und Erzeuger“ (κτίστης καὶ δημιουργός) den einen ungeborenen Gott an, vgl. *Apol.* 28,5f. (SC 305, 296). Andersorts freilich zeigt sich, dass der Vater durch den Eingeborenen als seinen Helfer, der ebenfalls „Schöpfer“ (ποιητής) genannt werden kann, schöpft, vgl. *Apol.* 15,12–21 (SC 305, 264). Ähnlich auch *Apol.* 17,10–13 (SC 305, 268), wo Eunomius anführt, dass Himmel und Engel Werk des Sohnes sind, der auf Geheiß des Vaters erschafft. In *Exp. fidei* 3,18f. (Vaggione 154) wird der Sohn bezeichnet als „Demiurg der Geister und jeglicher Körper, weil durch ihn alles geschaffen wurde (*Joh* 1,3)“. Ebenso in Gregors Zitierung des Eunomius in *CE* 111/9 47–48 (*GNO II*, 281,22–24; 282,4–10), wo dieser Sohn-Demiurgos im Auftrag des Vaters

Über die drei Wesen führt Eunomius nur an, dass ein jedes von ihnen „ganz einfach und innerhalb der eigenen Ordnung völlig einzigartig ist“,¹⁵ d.h. es kommt offenbar nicht in Betracht, dass die Verschiedenheit der schöpferischen Aktivitäten eine Verschiedenheit der Wesen, die von ihnen begleitet werden, implizieren würde. Ein Wesen kann offensichtlich von verschiedenen Aktivitäten begleitet werden. Eunomius betont wohl aus diesem Grunde, dass es im Falle der Untersuchung der Wesen nötig ist, „von den *ersten* Aktivitäten auszugehen, die den Wesen zukommen“ (ἐκ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προσεχῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργειῶν).¹⁶ Neben diesen „ersten Aktivitäten“ existieren wahrscheinlich auch weitere, die sich mit ein und demselben Wesen verbinden (nämlich schöpferische Aktivitäten in ihrer ganzen Vielfalt). Logisch wäre es eigentlich, dass die Aktivität, die die vielfältigen Wesen der geschaffenen Welt (Engel, Sterne und Menschen) begründet, dem dritten Wesen zukommt, dies jedoch lehnt Eunomius in seiner ersten *Apologie* ausdrücklich ab.¹⁷

In den angeführten Zitaten ging es jedoch Eunomius offenkundig nicht darum, sich mit der schöpferischen Aktivität und ihrem Träger zu befassen, sondern darum, die Beziehung zwischen den drei Wesen untereinander zu erklären, wie er sie auf der Grundlage des Modells „Wesen – seine (erste) Aktivität – Wirkung dieser Aktivität“ versteht.

(111) Eunomius' Polemik richtet sich vor allem gegen die Identifikation des ersten und zweiten Wesens, die ihm absurd erscheint.¹⁸ Entweder nämlich gilt, dass beide Wesen „ohne Anfang“ (ἀνάρχως) sind und dabei doch das eine aufgrund der Geburt „Sohn“ ist – dann jedoch wäre der Sohn, der ohne Anfang ist, zugleich aus etwas Seiendem entstanden. Oder es gäbe zwar nur *ein* Wesen ohne Anfang, dies jedoch würde Vater und Sohn umfassen – dann hätte eigentlich ein „ungeborenes Wesen sich selbst geboren“.¹⁹

schöpft; zugleich erfahren wir hier von verschiedenen Aktivitäten, durch welche verschiedene intelligible Wesen geschaffen werden, vgl. CE III/9 53 (GNO II, 283,29–284,2). Vgl. auch M.R. Barnes, *The Power of God: Dynamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington D.C. 2001, 212–214.

15 CE I 152 (GNO I, 72,10–12): ἐκάστης τούτων οὐσίας εἰλικρινῶς ἀπλῆς καὶ πάντη μιᾶς οὐσης τε καὶ νοουμένης κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἄξιαν.

16 CE I 154 (GNO I, 73,9 f.).

17 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apol.* 25,32 (SC 305, 286). Der Heilige Geist hat laut Eunomius heiligende und lehrende Macht (ebd. 25,32 f.), ist Mittler der Gnade, die „in ihm“ den Heiligen gegeben wird, vgl. *Apol.* 5,4–6 (SC 305,240).

18 CE I 476 (GNO I, 164,12 f.): τὴν αὐτὴν οὐσίαν τῷ γεννήσαντι καὶ τῷ γεννηθέντι διακληρώσαντες.

19 CE I 477 (GNO I, 164,26 f.): αὐτὴν παρ' ἐαυτῆς γεγεννησθαι τὴν ἀγέννητον οὐσίαν. Vgl. den gesamten Passus CE I 475–477 (GNO I, 164,1–5,10–27).

Offenbar ist es nicht möglich, dieser Absurdität zu entgehen, sofern wir an die Gottheit des Sohnes glauben und zugleich (mit Eunomius) Gott als „Ungeborenen“ verstehen. Ein beträchtlicher Teil der kappadokischen Polemik wendet sich deshalb eben gegen diese letztgenannte Vorstellung.²⁰ Die Bezeichnung „Ungeborener“ freilich lässt sich laut Eunomius nicht mit dem Namen „Vater“ gleichsetzen, wie dies die kappadokischen Theologen versuchen.²¹ Deshalb schenkt Eunomius außer den Aktivitäten, von denen die drei Wesen begleitet werden, auch den „Namen, die ihnen zukommen“ (τῶν ταύταις προσφῶν ὀνομάτων) Beachtung.²²

Die Absurdität der Identifikation der Namen „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ zeigt Eunomius anhand von drei syllogistischen Vorgehensweisen. Die erste ist eine Art Deduktion mit drei Voraussetzungen:

- (1) Sofern der ‚Vater‘, was den Sinn des Namens betrifft (κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν),²³ dasselbe ist wie der ‚Ungeborene‘, (2) sofern Namen, die denselben Sinn haben, genau dasselbe bezeichnen und (3) sofern der ‚Ungeborene‘ ihrer Meinung nach bedeutet, dass Gott nicht aus etwas hervorgeht, (4) dann bedeutet auch ‚Vater‘ notwendigerweise, dass Gott nicht aus etwas hervorgeht, und keinesfalls, dass er den Sohn gezeugt hat.²⁴

Die zweite Vorgehensweise zeigt die Absurdität der Synonymie der Namen „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ von der anderen Seite aus, nämlich aus der Sicht des „Vaters“ in seiner Beziehung zum „Sohn“:

20 In CE I vgl. beispielsweise 278 (GNO I, 107,23–108,3); 488–489 (GNO I, 167,26–168,8); 512 (GNO I, 174,14–23).

21 Laut Basilius ist der Ausdruck „Vater“ gleichbedeutend mit dem Begriff „Ungeborener“, nur fügt er zudem die Beziehung zum Sohn an. „Vater“ bedeutet nämlich, dass er „aus nichts anderem hervorgeht“, was dasselbe wie „Ungeborener“ ist. Vgl. Basilius, AE I 5,67–71 (SC 299, 176): ... τῆς Πατρὸς φωνῆς ἴσον δυναμένης τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ, πρὸς τῷ καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἔννοιαν συννημένως ἑαυτῇ διὰ τῆς σχέσεως συνεισάγειν. Ὁ γὰρ ὢν τῆς Πατρὸς καὶ μόνος ἐξ οὐδενὸς ἐστὶν ἑτέρου· τὸ δὲ ἐξ οὐδενὸς ταῦτόν ἐστι τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ. Gregor paraphrasiert diesen Gedanken in CE I 557 (GNO I, 187,15–19).

22 CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,9 f.).

23 S.G. Hall (*vid. supra*, 172): have the same meanig; R.P. Vaggione (Eunomius, *The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 103): is the same; B. Pottier (*Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 471): est identique selon sa puissance; R. Winling (SC 524, 273): est identique selon le sens.

24 CE I 552 (GNO I, 186,3–10): Εἰ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ, φησί, τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ ταῦτόν κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν, τὰ δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχοντα δύναμιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ταῦτόν πάντως καὶ σημαίνειν πέφυκε, σημαίνει δὲ τὸ ἀγεννήτον κατ’ αὐτοὺς τὸ ἐξ οὐδενὸς εἶναι τὸν θεόν, ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ τὸ πατήρ σημαίνει τὸ ἐξ οὐδενὸς εἶναι τὸν θεόν, οὐχὶ δὲ τὸ γεγεννηκέναι τὸν υἱόν.

(5) Sofern Gott Vater ist, weil er den Sohn gezeugt hat, und (1) sofern ‚Vater‘ dasselbe wie ‚Ungeborener‘ bedeutet, (6) dann ist Gott deshalb Ungeborener, weil er den Sohn gezeugt hat, und bevor er ihn gezeugt hat, war er kein Ungeborener.²⁵

Die dritte Vorgehensweise endlich zeigt die Unmöglichkeit auf, beide Titel als Synonyme auszutauschen:

(1) Sofern es dasselbe ist ‚Ungeborener‘ und ‚Vater‘ zu sagen, (7) dann werden wir den Ausdruck ‚Vater‘ verlassen, ihn durch den Titel ‚Ungeborener‘ ersetzen und sagen können: ‚Der Ungeborene ist der Ungeborene des Sohnes.‘ So wie nämlich der Ungeborene Vater des Sohnes ist, ist auch der Vater Ungeborener des Sohnes. Das eine entspricht doch dem anderen.²⁶

Durch die Absurdität der Schlüsse (4), (6) und (7) will Eunomius zeigen, dass die Ausgangsprämisse (1) der gesamten Erwägung nicht gelten kann: „Vater“ ist nicht dasselbe wie „Ungeborener“. Auch die dritte Prämisse (3) führt Eunomius als fremde Meinung (κατ’ αὐτούς) an, und zwar unter Anspielung auf die Ausführungen des Basilius.²⁷ Die zweite Prämisse (2) hingegen, nämlich dass „Namen derselben Bedeutung dieselbe Sache bezeichnen“ (τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχοντα δύνανται τῶν ὀνομάτων ταῦτὸν πάντως καὶ σημαίνειν πέφυκε), erkennt Eunomius offenbar an, oder will sie hier zumindest als Instrument benutzen, um die Absurdität der Argumente des Basilius aufzuzeigen.

Diese Prämisse (2) ist sicherlich strittig, sofern sie es ablehnt zwischen gemeinsamer „Bedeutung“ im Sinne derselben außersprachlichen *Referenz*, auf die sich bestimmte Titel beziehen (z. B. der Planet Venus, der als „Morgenröte“ und „Abendröte“ bezeichnet wird), und der Synonymie von Titeln, die denselben *Aspekt* oder „Sinn“ betreffen (ein traditionelles Beispiel ist *ensis* und *mucro* für „Schwert“), zu unterscheiden. Eunomius’ syllogistische Deduktion gilt nur in dem Falle, dass es sich um eine Synonymie von Titeln handelt,

25 CE I 577 (GNO I, 192,20–193,1): εἰ γὰρ διὰ τὸ γεγεννηκέναι τὸν υἱὸν ὁ θεός ἐστι πατήρ, κατὰ ταῦτὸν δὲ σημαίνόμενον πατήρ ἐστι καὶ ἀγέννητος, διὰ τὸ γεγεννηκέναι τὸν υἱὸν ὁ θεός ἐστιν ἀγέννητος, πρὶν δὲ γεννηῆσαι τοῦτον οὐκ ἦν ἀγέννητος.

26 CE I 608 (GNO I, 201,26–202,5): εἰ γὰρ ταῦτόν ἐστιν εἰπεῖν ἀγέννητος ἢ πατήρ, ἐξέσται ἡμῖν καταλιποῦσι τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φωνήν, μεταλαβοῦσι δὲ τὸ ἀγέννητον εἰπεῖν· ὁ ἀγέννητος υἱὸς ἐστιν ἀγέννητος· ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἀγέννητος υἱὸς πατήρ, οὕτως ἔμπαλιν υἱὸς ἀγέννητος ὁ πατήρ. παραπλήσιον γὰρ τοῦτο ἐκείνῳ. Vgl. auch CE I 600 (GNO I, 199,4–10).

27 Basilius, AE I 5,67–71 (SC 299, 176). Zitiert oben, Anm. 21. Diesen Gedanken wiederholt Gregor in CE I 536 (GNO I, 181,23–26).

die ein und denselben Aspekt ausdrücken. Basilius hatte wirklich nicht nur dieselbe *Referenz* im Sinne, sondern zum Teil auch eine Synonymie, die denselben *Aspekt* ausdrückt: „Vater“ bedeutet nämlich seiner Auslegung zufolge, dass er „nicht aus einem anderen hervorgeht“, was dasselbe wie „Ungeborener“ ist.²⁸

Sofern Eunomius behaupten würde, dass die Titel „Ungeborener“ und „Vater“ verschiedene *Referenzen* haben, dann wäre „Ungeborener“ offenbar Name des Wesens, während sich die Bezeichnung „Vater“ auf die Aktivität beziehen würde, die als etwas Unterschiedliches dieses Wesen begleitet und als seine Wirkung das zweite Wesen begründet. So zumindest interpretiert Gregor dessen Position, wie wir gleich sehen werden, und so wird sie für gewöhnlich auch in der heutigen Literatur verstanden.²⁹

Es ist freilich nicht klar, ob Eunomius seine Auslegung wirklich in diesem traditionell rekonstruierten Sinne gemeint hat. Vielleicht wollte er nicht sagen, dass sich die Titel „Ungeborener“ und „Vater“ durch ihre *Referenz* unterscheiden (wie der Name des Wesens bzw. der Aktivität, die etwas Unterschiedliches sind), sondern nur durch ihren *Sinn* oder durch den Standpunkt, von dem aus sie über dieses Wesen sprechen, dass sie also nicht als Synonym zu verstehen sind. Vielleicht nämlich wollte Eunomius die Aktivität nicht ganz verselbstständigen oder „substantialisieren“, sondern wollte bloß sagen, dass sie nur anhand ihrer Wirkung als bestimmter Aspekt des Wesens selbst (der gewiss nicht völlig mit dem Wesen als solchem identisch ist) erfahrbar wird. Also lässt sich wohl der Vater nur aus seiner „Wirkung“, welche der Sohn ist, erkennen, ohne dass freilich die Aktivität, die diese „Wirkung“ schafft, im „Vater“ als etwas Selbstständiges neben dem „Ungeborenen“ substantialisiert werden kann.³⁰ Diese Erwägungen haben notwendigerweise hypothetischen Charak-

28 Siehe oben, Anm. 21. Ähnlich auch Gregor, vgl. unten, Anm. 107.

29 Zu Eunomius' Verständnis des Vaters als Aktivität des Ungeborenen vgl. B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 129–132; siehe auch Schema, ebd., 136 (hier auch ein unpubliziertes älteres Schema von M. Van Parys). Ähnlich auch B. Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité: Un acte théologique au IV^e siècle. Le rôle de Basile de Césarée dans l'élaboration de la doctrine et du langage trinitaires*, Paris 1998, 44 (Schema 52); M.R. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 189–191. Andere Forscher drücken sich freilich weniger resolut aus, vgl. X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire et polémique trinitaire. Le subordinatianisme d'Eunome et la distinction ktiston/aktiston dans le Contre Eunome I de Grégoire de Nysse*, Münster 2013, 107–111.

30 Nach den Worten A. Schindlers (*Die Begründung der Trinitätslehre in der eunomianischen Kontroverse. Eine Untersuchung zu den Apologien des Eunomius, zu Basilius' des Grossen Schrift gegen Eunomius und zu Gregors von Nyssa trinitarischen Schriften*, unpublizierte

ter, da Eunomius' Vorstellung anhand der zitierten Fragmente nicht genau festgestellt werden kann. Eine gewisse Ausmalung hierzu bieten jedoch seine erste *Apologie* und auch weitere Zitate, die Gregor im zweiten und dritten Buch seiner Polemik bewahrt hat.

„Ungeborener“ und „Vater“

Zu Beginn seiner ursprünglichen *Apologie*, auf die Basilius in seiner Polemik reagiert, schließt sich Eunomius dem Bekenntnis zum „einen Gott, dem allmächtigen Vater“ an,³¹ den er mit dem „einen Gott“ identifiziert, der „weder aus sich selbst noch aus einem anderen entstanden ist (γενόμενος)“.³² Er fügt freilich hinzu, dass er als Ungeborener (ἀγέννητος) „keine Zeugung zulässt, um so seine Natur an den Gezeugten weiterzugeben“.³³ Eunomius will auf diese Weise offenbar eine wirkliche Transzendenz des ersten Anfangs (ähnlich wie die Neuplatoniker)³⁴ sicherstellen und zugleich der unangebrachten Vorstellung einer biologischen Zeugung entgegen.³⁵ Aus diesem Grunde sagt er wohl auch, dass – während der „Sohn“ Name des Wesens ist – der „Vater“ die Aktivität des Erzeugers bezeichnet (τὴν τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἐνέργειαν),³⁶ nicht das Wesen.³⁷ Der Sohn ist deshalb Bild dieser Aktivität, d.h. des Vaters, nicht des Ungeborenen, wie Eunomius den Ausspruch des Apostels (Kol 1,15) präzi-

Dissertation, Zürich 1964, 144 f.; ich zitiere nach X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire*, 108, Anm. 91): „Er [Eunomius] sagt, streng genommen, nur, dass die Bezeichnung ‚Vater‘ ihn, den Ungezeugten, als den Zeugenden bzw. Wirkenden anzeige und nicht sein Wesen.“ Ähnlich auch R.P. Vaggione (*Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000, 134): „Eunomius ... claimed that ‚Father‘ as applied to God could not refer to God's essence but to God's essence in action (*energeia*); in other words, it described what God was doing, not who God is.“

31 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apol.* 5,1 (SC 305, 240).

32 Vgl. Eunomius, *Apol.* 7,1–3 (SC 305, 244).

33 Eunomius, *Apol.* 9,1–3 (SC 305, 250).

34 Zur Transzendenz des Einen bei Plotin vgl. z.B. *Enn.* v 3(49),11,16–30. Auch hier gibt das Eine, was es selbst nicht hat und was es selbst nicht ist, vgl. z.B. *Enn.* vi 9(9),6,54–57; vi 7(38),15,19 f.; 17,3–18; v 3(49),15,1–3. Siehe hierzu C. D'Ancona Costa, „*Ἀμορφὸν καὶ ἀνείθεον*. Causalité des formes et causalité de l'Un chez Plotin“, *Revue de philosophie ancienne* 10 (1992) 69–113, insbesondere 104–113.

35 Eunomius, *Apol.* 16,1–17,6 (SC 305, 264–266).

36 Eunomius, *Apol.* 24,26–28 (SC 305, 282).

37 Eunomius, *Apol.* 24,29 f. (SC 305, 284).

siert.³⁸ Den Vater oder die zeugende göttliche Aktivität charakterisiert Eunomius dabei folgendermaßen:

eine Aktivität, die auf ungeborene Art und Weise (ἀγεννήτως) in der (göttlichen) Vorhersehung vor der Gründung des Erstgeborenen und allem, was in ihm geschaffen wurde (vgl. Kol 1,15), eingeschlossen ist (ἐναποκειμένην).³⁹

Auch in Zusammenhang mit der Entstehung und dem Ende der geschaffenen Welt versichert Eunomius, dass es nicht angebracht ist, die schöpferische Aktivität nach Art der Heiden vollkommen mit dem göttlichen Wesen gleichzusetzen (ἐνοῦν τῇ οὐσίᾳ τὴν ἐνέργειαν),⁴⁰ da die Aktivität etwas ist, was ähnlich wie ihre Wirkung beginnt und endet und damit nicht „ohne Anfang“ (ἄναρχος) ist;⁴¹ es handelt sich um eine Art Willen (βούλησις), nicht um ein Wesen.⁴² In einigen Bekenntnissen, die wir aus seiner Feder haben, geht Eunomius der Bezeichnung „Vater“ ganz aus dem Weg und spricht vom „einzigen wahren Gott“, der „ungeboren, ohne Anfang“ usw. ist.⁴³ Den „Vater“ erwähnt er hier nur im Zusammenhang mit der Zeugung des Sohnes,⁴⁴ über den er auch ableitet, dass er „existiert, weil er aus der Entscheidung (γνώμη) des Gottes und Vaters geboren wurde“.⁴⁵

An anderer Stelle seiner *Apologie* benutzt Eunomius jedoch die Evangeliumsworte vom „Vater, der größer ist“ als der Sohn (vgl. Joh 14,28), um die Verschiedenheit des Wesens des Geborenen und des Ungeborenen zu zeigen.⁴⁶ Zugleich führt er an, dass der Sohn „Nachkomme und Werk des Ungeborenen und Ungeschaffenen“ ist,⁴⁷ dass „Gott, wenn er zeugt, seine Natur nicht auf den Gezeugten überträgt, so wie es der Mensch tut“.⁴⁸

38 Eunomius, *Apol.* 24,7–28 (SC 305, 282).

39 Eunomius, *Apol.* 24,14–16 (SC 305, 282).

40 Eunomius, *Apol.* 22,12 f. (SC 305, 278); vgl. auch *Apol.* 23,18 f. (SC 305, 280).

41 Eunomius, *Apol.* 23,10–17 (SC 305, 280); vgl. auch *Apol.* 22,14–18 (SC 305, 278).

42 Eunomius, *Apol.* 23,18–20 (SC 305, 280); 24,1–5 (SC 305, 282). Auch in einem seiner Bekenntnisse führt Eunomius an, dass der Sohn aus dem Willen des einen ungeborenen Gottes hervorgeht, vgl. *Apol.* 28,15 f. (SC 305, 296).

43 Eunomius, *Apol.* 26,3 f. (SC 305, 288); 28,1.25 (SC 305, 296–298).

44 Eunomius, *Apol.* 24,2 f. (SC 305, 282).

45 Eunomius, *Apol.* 12,13 f. (SC 305, 258).

46 Eunomius, *Apol.* 11,10–16 (SC 305, 256).

47 Eunomius, *Apol.* 17,10 f. (SC 305, 268).

48 Eunomius, *Apol.* 18,1 f. (SC 305, 268).

Es lässt sich also abschließend sagen, dass Eunomius die Namen „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ manchmal auch austauschbar verwendet, obgleich er sich bewusst ist, dass der erste nur ein bestimmter Aspekt des zweiten ist und mit ihm nicht völlig identisch.⁴⁹

Sofern es um die Benutzung der Namen geht, betont Eunomius in seiner ersten *Apologie*, dass verschiedene Namen verschiedene Wesen bezeichnen,⁵⁰ d. h. eine unterschiedliche Referenz haben. Dieser Grundsatz bezieht sich hier jedoch offensichtlich auf die Namen „Geborener“ und „Ungeborener“. An anderer Stelle denkt Eunomius auch über Namen nach, die einen unterschiedlichen Wortlaut (ἐκφώνησις) haben, aber dieselbe Bedeutung (σημασία), z. B. „der, der ist“ (Ex 3,14) und „der einzige wahre Gott“ (Joh 17,3).⁵¹ Es ist nicht ganz ausgeschlossen, dass er den Begriffen „Ungeborener“ und „Vater“ gerade diesen letzten Typ von Synonymie ein und desselben *Aspektes* (nicht derselben *Referenz*) absprechen will. In seiner *Apologie* gibt Eunomius sogar zu, dass „alles, was als Bezeichnung des Wesens des Vaters angeführt wird, der Bedeutung nach dasselbe mit dem Ungeborenen sein muss, wegen seiner Unteilbarkeit und Nichtzusammengesetztheit“.⁵² Diese Voraussetzung jedoch ist wohl nur eine Konzession an die kappadokische Theologie, die mit ihren eigenen Waffen geschlagen werden soll.

Im Fragment der Antwort des Eunomius an Basilius (*Apologie der Apologie*), wie es Gregor in der Fortsetzung seiner Polemik aufbewahrt hat, erfahren wir zudem, dass die Titel „Vater“ und „Demiurg“ Gott aufgrund seiner Aktivitäten gegeben werden, nicht aufgrund seines Wesens, welches von den Namen „Unverletzbarer“ und „Ungeborener“ bezeichnet wird.⁵³ Wenn dieses Zitat genau ist (was wir nicht wissen, vielleicht handelt es sich eher um eine Paraphrase), dann wäre die *Referenz* der Titel „Vater“ und „Demiurg“ dieselbe, nämlich Gott, von dem gleichzeitig ausgesagt wird, dass er der „Ungeborene“ ist. In diesem Fall haben also auch die Titel „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ dieselbe *Referenz*, nämlich Gott, obgleich der erste von dem Wesen, der zweite von einer seiner Aktivitäten ausgesagt wird, d. h. die beiden Titel unterscheiden sich nur

49 Zu Eunomius' Verwendung des Ausdrucks „Vater“ in seiner *Apologie* vgl. B. Sesboüé, *Saint Basile et la Trinité*, 45 f.; X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire*, 109–111.

50 Eunomius, *Apol.* 18,17 f. (SC 305, 270).

51 Eunomius, *Apol.* 17,1 f. (SC 305, 266).

52 Eunomius, *Apol.* 19,19–21 (SC 305, 272): πᾶν ὅπερ λέγεται τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας σημαντικόν, ἴσον ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν τῆς σημασίας δύναμιν τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ διὰ τὸ ἀμερὲς καὶ ἀσύνθετον.

53 CE II 371 (GNO I, 23 f.): οὐκ ἐξ ἐνεργειῶν, φησὶν, ἄφθαρτός ἐστιν καὶ ἀγέννητος ὡς πατήρ τε καὶ δημιουργός.

durch ihren *Aspekt* oder „Sinn“. ⁵⁴ Ähnlich in einem anderen Zitat Gregors, in dem wir erfahren, dass der „Vater“ eine der Benennungen Gottes (ὀνομάτων, ὅσα περὶ αὐτὸν λέγεται) ist, die ihm freilich zusätzlich, erst aufgrund der Zeugung des Sohnes, gegeben wurde. ⁵⁵ Gregor wirft Eunomius sogar vor, dass – wenn die „Bedeutung“ (τὸ σημαίνόμενον oder σημασία) aller Aussagen über Gott seiner Ansicht nach dieselbe ist – auch die Bedeutung der Titel „Vater“ und „Demiurg“ in eins fallen müsste, sofern beides aufgrund der Aktivität ausgesagt wird. ⁵⁶ Diese ironische Deduktion verrät uns jedoch nichts über die Position des Eunomius selbst, der im Gegenteil anführt, dass sein Grundsatz über „die Namen, die Verschiedenheit der Eigenschaften aussagen und sich deshalb auch auf unterschiedliche Sachen beziehen“, ⁵⁷ nicht nur für die Wesen gilt, sondern auch für Aktivitäten. ⁵⁸ Mit unterschiedlichen „Sachen“ meint er hier anscheinend verschiedene Eigenschaften (τὰς ιδιότητας) oder vielleicht verschiedene *Aspekte*, nicht notwendigerweise eine verschiedene *Referenz*.

Gregor zitiert ebenfalls eine Formulierung des Eunomius, nach welcher „derjenige, der ist“, keine Zeugung nötig hat. ⁵⁹ Das Wesen des Sohnes wird auch hier vom Vater gezeugt, und zwar allein durch seinen Willen (μόνη τῇ βουλήσει), ⁶⁰ der Sohn „ist und lebt durch den Vater“. ⁶¹ Seine Geburt hat dabei den Charakter eines Geschehens, das beginnt und endet, nicht von unendlicher Dauer ist, so wie eine jede Geburt. ⁶²

Auch diese Stellen schließen also nicht die Hypothese aus, dass Eunomius mit den Namen „Ungeborener“ und „Vater“ verschiedene Aspekte des „einzigen wahren Gottes“ meinte, nämlich mit dem ersten sein Wesen, mit dem zweiten seine Aktivität, ohne freilich diese Aktivität als etwas Selbstständiges aufzufassen. Diese Aktivität ist zwar laut Eunomius in ihrer Leistung nicht „ohne

54 Ähnlich erfahren wir auch über den eingeborenen Gott, dass ihm aufgrund verschiedener Aktivitäten verschiedene Bezeichnungen (τὰς ἐπινοίας) gegeben werden, vgl. CE II 363 (GNO I, 332,18–22).

55 CE II 493 (GNO I, 370,14–19): ὁψέ ποτε τὸν θεὸν γεγενῆσθαι πατέρα καὶ τὸ τῆς πατρότητος ὄνομα νεώτερον εἶναι τῶν λοιπῶν ὀνομάτων, ὅσα περὶ αὐτὸν λέγεται. ἐξ ἐκείνου γὰρ αὐτὸν κληθῆναι πατέρα ἂν οὐ προέθετο γενέσθαι πατὴρ καὶ ἐγένετο.

56 CE II 494–496 (GNO I, 370,1–371,16).

57 CE III/5 39 (GNO II, 174,18–20): ἡ παραλλαγή τῶν τὰς ιδιότητας σημαίνοντων ὀνομάτων τὴν παραλλαγὴν ἐμφαίνει τῶν πραγμάτων ...

58 CE III/5 39 (GNO II, 174,15–175,2).

59 CE III/7 59 (GNO II, 235,25f.): τῷ γὰρ ὄντι, καθὼς φησιν ὁ Εὐνόμιος, οὐ δεῖ γεννήσεως.

60 CE III/2 28 (GNO II, 61,13).

61 CE III/8 43 (GNO II, 255,1f.): ὁ διὰ τὸν πατέρα ὢν καὶ ζῶν.

62 CE III/7 26 (GNO II, 224,4f.): πάσης γεννήσεως οὐκ ἐπ’ ἄπειρον ἐκτεινομένης.

Anfang“, doch „auf ungeborene Art und Weise in der Vorhersehung (Gottes) eingeschlossen“, d. h. eine Art seines inneren Aspekts.

Gregors Antwort

(1) Gegen Eunomius' Position führt Gregor vor allem an, dass es nicht geboten ist, Sohn und Geist als dem Vater untergeordnet zu verstehen, da auch ihnen dasselbe Wesen zukommt, d. h. „das höchste Wesen im eigentlichen Sinne“. ⁶³ Die „Unbegrenztheit“ (τὸ ἀόριστον) oder „Unendlichkeit“ (τὸ ἄπειρον), die dieses Wesen charakterisiert, lässt seiner Ansicht nach keine Abstufung zu, weil ihre Güte nicht vom Gegenteil begrenzt wird. ⁶⁴ Auch die Einfachheit (ἀπλότης), die dem göttlichen Wesen eigen ist, erlaubt es nicht, von ihr die Begriffe „mehr“ oder „weniger“ zu gebrauchen, da diese laut Gregor abstufbare Eigenschaften sowie deren Träger voraussetzen, d. h. eine Zusammengefüghtheit. ⁶⁵ Deshalb spricht Gregor auch nicht von drei „Wesen“, sondern von „Hypostasen“ ⁶⁶ (gelegentlich auch von „Personen“, πρόσωπα), ⁶⁷ zwischen denen kein Unterschied in der räumlichen Größe noch in der zeitlichen Dauer besteht. ⁶⁸ Sie unterscheiden sich durch individuelle Charakteristiken (τοῖς ἐπιθεωρουμένοις ἰδιώμασι), nicht jedoch durch das Wesen selbst (αὐτὴν τὴν ὑποκειμένην οὐσίαν). ⁶⁹

Nicht nur die Unendlichkeit und Einfachheit, sondern auch das „Wesen“ lässt nach Gregors Ansicht keine Abstufung zu (τὸ μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἥττον τῆς οὐσίας), ⁷⁰ wie Eunomius' Auslegung andeutet, wenn er von dem Wesen „im höchsten und eigentlichen Sinne“ spricht. Ein Wesen *ist* doch nicht mehr (μᾶλ-

63 CE I 161–164 (GNO I, 75,15–76,15).

64 CE I 168–169 (GNO I, 77,7–23). Gregor spricht auch von der Ewigkeit im Sinne von Unbegrenztheit (wie ein Kreis, der kein Ende hat), da die Ungeborenheit als Absenz des Anfangs durch die Absenz des Endes ergänzt werden muss, vgl. CE I 666–670 (GNO I, 217,26–219,7).

65 CE I 232–233 (GNO I, 94,23–95,12). Einfachheit schließt zudem die Anwesenheit des Gegenteils, also der Begrenztheit aus; auch aus diesem Grunde ist für Gregor die Einheit nicht abstufbar, vgl. CE I 235–237 (GNO I, 95,20–96,12); CE I 276–277 (GNO I, 107,4–22). Siehe hierzu A. Meredith, „The Divine Simplicity: *Contra Eunomium* I 223–241“, *vid. supra*, 364–367.

66 Vgl. beispielsweise CE I 162 (GNO I, 75,25); CE I 167 (GNO I, 77,7) u. a. Zu Gregors Verwendung dieses Begriffs in CE vgl. B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 101–106.

67 Vgl. CE I 229 (GNO I, 94,3); CE I 503 (GNO I, 172,2).

68 CE I 170–171 (GNO I, 77,23–78,3).

69 CE I 228 (GNO I, 93,16–18).

70 CE I 180 (GNO I, 80,1).

λον ἔστι) als das andere,⁷¹ so dass der Träger der anderen Bestimmungen (τὸ ὑποκειμένον oder οὐσία) mehr oder weniger an Sein hätte (ἐν τῷ μᾶλλον εἶναι τὴν διαφορὰν ἔχει).⁷² Gregor lässt keine Abstufung des Seins zu, sondern nur dessen Leugnung, die völlige Nichtexistenz bedeutet.⁷³

Dieses Argument, von dem Gregor vor allem ableiten will, dass es unmöglich ist, nur dem Vater „das höchste Wesen im eigentlichen Sinne“ zuzuschreiben, ist auch als Zeugnis seiner Ontologie interessant, die (zumindest an dieser Stelle) offenbar eher aristotelische als platonische Einflüsse verrät. Sofern Gregor die Abstufung des Seins ablehnt, und zwar unter Berufung auf „heidnische Philosophen“ oder Menschen, „die im Philosophieren über diese Dinge bewandert sind“,⁷⁴ hat er offenbar vor allem die aristotelische Ontologie im Sinn.⁷⁵ Im Rahmen einer anderen Ontologie müsste die Abstufung des Seins nicht gänzlich absurd erscheinen, ebenso wie der Vergleich einer größeren und kleineren Unendlichkeit (oder einfach einer „Unendlichkeit“ anderen Typs). Das gleiche gilt auch für ein größeres oder kleineres Maß an Einfachheit, das Gregor Eunomius ebenfalls zuschreibt⁷⁶ (jede der drei Wesen ist nämlich, so Eunomius, „ganz einfach und innerhalb der eigenen Ordnung völlig einzigartig“).⁷⁷

Gregor unterteilt zwar das Seiende in sinnlich Wahrnehmbares (τὸ αἰσθητόν) und Intelligibles (τὸ νοητόν), dieses zweite dann weiter in ungeschaffene (ἄκτιστος) und geschaffene (κτιστή) Natur,⁷⁸ seiner Vorstellung nach handelt es sich jedoch nicht um eine Abstufung des Seins. Die Charakteristiken „mehr“ und „weniger“ beziehen sich, so Gregor, zum einen auf die Eigenschaften der sinnlichen Dinge,⁷⁹ zum anderen auf die freie Partizipation am Guten bei geschaffenen intelligiblen Wesen, die sich an der Grenze zwischen dem Guten und

71 CE I 181 (GNO I, 80,3).

72 CE I 182 (GNO I, 80,10–12).

73 CE I 184 (GNO I, 81,4 f.): τὴν καθόλου τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ἀναίρεσιν.

74 CE I 186 (GNO I, 81,16): τῶν ἔξω τῆς πίστεως πεφιλοσοφηκότων. CE I 283 (GNO I, 109,23): τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα φιλοσοφεῖν εἰδόντων.

75 Vgl. Aristoteles, *Cat.* 5, 3b33–4a9. Siehe hierzu B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 92–95.

76 CE I 240–241 (GNO I, 96,28–97,20).

77 CE I 152 (GNO I, 72,10–12).

78 CE I 270–271 (GNO I, 105,19–106,6); CE I 295 (GNO I, 113,20–26). Zu Gregors Unterteilung des Seins vgl. D.L. Balás, *Μετουσία Θεοῦ. Man's participation in God's perfections according to saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Roma 1966, 23–53; A.A. Mosshammer, „The Created and the Uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* I 270–295 (GNO I, 105–113)“, *vid. supra*, 384–411; X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire*, 230–240.

79 CE I 272 (GNO I, 106,6–11).

seinem Gegenteil befinden.⁸⁰ Auch hier jedoch begründet das gewählte Maß der Anteilnahme am Guten keine Abstufung des Seins, denn das Wesen selbst, all seiner Bestimmungen enthoben, kann nicht abgestuft werden.⁸¹ Für die ungeschaffene Natur ist es zudem unangebracht vorauszusetzen, dass sie am Guten einen abgestuften Anteil im Sinne einer akzidentiellen Qualität haben sollte,⁸² denn Güte gehört ihr vom Wesen her an.⁸³

(11) Sofern es um die Aktivitäten geht, von denen die Wesen laut Eunomius' Beschreibung begleitet werden,⁸⁴ erwägt Gregor zwei Möglichkeiten: (1) Entweder sind diese Aktivitäten etwas anderes als die Wesen, (2) oder sind sie ihr Teil, der dieselbe Natur hat.⁸⁵ Im ersten Falle ließe sich nach dem Ursprung der Aktivitäten fragen: „wie und woher sie entstehen“.⁸⁶ Im zweiten Fall bleibt unklar, „wie sie von den Wesen getrennt wurden und sie – statt zusammen mit ihnen zu existieren – von außen begleiten“.⁸⁷ Wir sehen, dass die oben genannte Alternative, dass nämlich die Aktivitäten eine Art *innerer* Aspekt der Wesen sind, von Gregor gar nicht in Erwägung gezogen wird.

Gregor erwägt des Weiteren die Form dieser „Begleitung“, die seiner Vorstellung nach entweder (1) „natürlich“ und „notwendig“ (*ἀνάγκης τινὸς φυσικῆς ἀπροαιρέτως*) sein kann, so wie das Brennen das Feuer begleitet oder der Duft manche Stoffe, oder (2) deliberativ und frei (*προαιρετικῶς καὶ αὐτεξουσίως*), d. h. dass die Wesen aufgrund ihrer Entscheidung handeln.⁸⁸ Die erste Möglichkeit hält Gregor nicht für wahrscheinlich, da das göttliche Wesen dann etwas Zusammengefügtes wäre und seine Aktivität eine Art Akzidens von ihm, untrennbar von ihrem Träger.⁸⁹ Die zweite Möglichkeit scheint ihm nun wieder nicht adäquat durch den Termin „begleiten“ getroffen, den wir seinem Sprach-

80 CE I 273–275 (GNO I, 106,12–107,4).

81 CE I 283 (GNO I, 109,22–110,1).

82 CE I 283–284 (GNO I, 109,22–110,13).

83 CE I 285 (GNO I, 110,18): κατ' οὐσίαν ἐνυπάρχειν αὐτῇ τὸ ἀγαθόν.

84 CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,8f.): τῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις παρεπομένων ἐνεργειῶν.

85 CE I 207 (GNO I, 87,5f.): ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὰς οὐσίας αἷς παρέπονται ἢ μέρος ἐκείνων καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως.

86 CE I 207 (GNO I, 87,6f.): πῶς ἢ παρὰ τίνος γενόμεναι.

87 CE I 207 (GNO I, 87,7f.): πῶς ἀποτεμνόμεναι καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ „συνυπάρχειν“ αὐταῖς ἔξωθεν παρεπόμεναι.

88 CE I 208 (GNO I, 87,10.17f.).

89 CE I 208 (GNO I, 87,14–17): ποικίλον τι χρῆμα καὶ σύνθετον νομίζειν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν, ἀχώριστον ἔχουσαν καὶ συνεπιθεωρουμένην ἑαυτῇ τὴν ἐνέργειαν, ὥς τι συμβεβηκὸς ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δεικνύμενον.

gefühl nach nicht für die Aktivität von jemandem benutzen würden, der an einem Werk arbeitet.⁹⁰ Diese Aktivität ist doch nicht etwas, was ihrem Träger gegenüber selbstständig und abtrennbar wäre, sondern eher ist eines im anderen impliziert.⁹¹ Zur Unterstützung dieser letzten Behauptung führt Gregor die Art und Weise an, in der wir Begriffe für eine Aktivität benutzen, z. B. „sich dem Schmiedehandwerk widmen“ (χαλκεύειν) oder „sich dem Zimmermannshandwerk widmen“ (τεκταίνεσθαι), wo die Aktivität ebenfalls nicht von dem zu trennen ist, der sie ausführt, und umgekehrt.⁹²

Diese gegenseitige Implikation der Aktivität und ihres Trägers ist jedoch laut Gregor durch den Begriff „begleiten“ (ἔπεσθαι) ausgeschlossen, der in seinen Augen die Abgetrenntheit und Selbstständigkeit der Aktivitäten ausdrückt. Dieser Begriff bedeutet seinem Verständnis nach, dass die Aktivität in irgendeiner Weise zwischen dem ersten und dem zweiten Wesen vermittelt, ohne in ihrer Natur mit einem übereinzustimmen oder eng mit dem zweiten verbunden zu sein⁹³ (mit den Worten B. Pottiers: „statut ontologique bâtarde“).⁹⁴

Ist jedoch eine solche Lesart notwendig? Könnte nicht die Beziehung der Aktivität zu ihrem Wesen aufgrund der Aussagen des Eunomius gerade als eine Art Implikation der Aktivität im Wesen verstanden werden, die eine Verselbstständigung der Aktivität nicht voraussetzt, ja gar nicht zulässt?⁹⁵

Eunomius führt weiter an, dass „Aktivitäten durch ihre Wirkungen definiert werden und die Wirkungen den Aktivitäten entsprechen, von denen sie geschaffen wurden“.⁹⁶ Auf Grundlage dieser Formulierung stellt Gregor die Aktivität als eine Art Instrument (ὄργανον) dar, mit dessen Hilfe beispielsweise

90 CE I 209 (GNO I, 87,22f.): τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ περὶ τι πονοῦντος ἀκολουθεῖν τῷ πονοῦντι λέγειν.

91 CE I 209 (GNO I, 87,24–88,3).

92 CE I 210 (GNO I, 88,5–9). Diese zwei Handwerke erscheinen oft gemeinsam, vgl. Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 163; Platon, *Leg.* 846e; Xenophon, *Memor.* IV,2,22.

93 CE I 211 (GNO I, 88,12–14): μεσιτεύουσά πως δι' ἑαυτῆς ἀμφοτέραις καὶ οὔτε τῇ πρώτῃ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν συμβαίνουσα οὔτε πρὸς τὴν δευτέραν συναπτομένη.

94 B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ*, 132. Ähnlicher Ansicht ist der Großteil der Interpreten, vgl. z. B. T. Th. Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought*, Oxford 2012, 43 f. und 49.

95 An anderer Stelle benutzt Eunomius den Ausdruck „nachfolgen“ ἀκολουθεῖν (nicht παρέπεσθαι) für die enge Verbundenheit von Ungeborenheit und Gottheit, vgl. *Apol.* 7,13 (SC 305, 246), zitiert in CE I 663 (GNO I, 217,10 f.); siehe auch das erklärende Zitat in CE I 661 (GNO I, 216,16–22). Gregor ändert in seiner Polemik ἀκολουθεῖν zu ἔπεσθαι bzw. παρέπεσθαι, vgl. CE I 654 (GNO I, 217,14), bzw. CE I 658 (GNO I, 215,13).

96 CE I 152 (GNO I, 72,12–15): συμπεριγραφομένων δὲ τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν ἐνεργειῶν, καὶ τῶν ἔργων ταῖς τῶν ἐργασαμένων ἐνεργείαις παραμετρούμενων.

ein Handwerker sein Erzeugnis, d. h. „Wirkung“ oder „Werk“ herstellt, in Form und Größe dem benutzten Instrument oder der Aktivität, die es geschaffen hat, entsprechend.⁹⁷ Diese ironisierende Interpretation wird den Vorstellungen des Eunomius ganz sicher nicht gerecht. Die „Kommensurabilität“ der Aktivität und ihrer Wirkung soll offenbar eher zeigen, dass der Charakter (und wahrscheinlich auch die ontologische Stufe) der Aktivität aus ihrer Wirkung erkennbar ist. Für eine Instrumentalisierung der Aktivität besteht in den Auslegungen des Eunomius jedoch kein Grund.

Gregor verbindet diese Vorstellung einer substantialisierten Aktivität weiter mit ihrem nicht natürlichen, sondern freien Charakter (wie wir ihm in Eunomius' *Apologie* begegnet sind), um so eine Parodie auf Eunomius' Verständnis des Vaters zu zeichnen:

Eine Art wesentliche Potenz, die an sich subsistiert (δύναμις τις οὐσιώδης καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑφεστῶσα) und wahrscheinlich in freier Bewegung wirkt (δι' αὐτεξουσίου κινήματος). Diese ist also der Vater unseres Herrn. Und warum sollten wir noch den über alles erhabenen Gott als ‚Vater‘ hinstellen, wenn nicht er dem Sohn Entstehung gegeben hat, sondern irgendeine Aktivität, die ihn äußerlich begleitet (τις ἐνέργεια τῶν ἔξωθεν αὐτῷ παρεπομένων)?⁹⁸

Wie wir bereits aufzuzeigen versucht haben, unterscheidet sich diese Vorstellung des Vaters teilweise von der des Eunomius, oder ist zumindest nicht bewiesen. Eunomius will die Aktivität wahrscheinlich nicht in etwas an sich Subsistierendes verselbständigen, und es ist auch nicht klar, dass sie das höchste Wesen „von außen“ begleitet.

An anderer Stelle seiner Polemik erwägt Gregor auch die Möglichkeit, dass die Aktivität laut Eunomius zwar frei, doch unsubstantialisiert ist, d. h. eine Art „nichtsusbstanzierende Bewegung des Willens“ (θελήματος τινα κίνησιν ἀνυπόστατον).⁹⁹ Diese Möglichkeit ist jedoch in Gregors Augen eher unwahrscheinlich, weil seine eigene Ontologie keine andere Möglichkeit zulässt, als dass die Aktivität entweder ein selbstständiges Wesen ist, oder überhaupt nicht existiert:

97 CE I 245–246 (GNO I, 98,19–99,7).

98 CE I 247 (GNO I, 99,8–12): δύναμις τις οὐσιώδης καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑφεστῶσα καὶ τὸ δοκοῦν ἐργαζομένη δι' αὐτεξουσίου κινήματος. οὐκοῦν αὕτη πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου. καὶ τί ἔτι ἐπιθρυλεῖται τῷ ἐπὶ πάντων θεῷ ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς κλήσις, εἰ μὴ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλὰ τις ἐνέργεια τῶν ἔξωθεν αὐτῷ παρεπομένων τὸν υἱὸν ἀπειργάσατο;

99 CE I 323 (GNO I, 122,27 f.).

Sofern er sagen würde, dass die Aktivität, für deren Ergebnis er den Sohn hält, nichts Subsistierendes ist (ἀνυπόστατόν τι πράγμα), dann solle er erklären, wie ein Nichtseiendes etwas Seiendes begleitet (πῶς ἔπεται τῷ ὄντι τὸ μὴ ὄν), wie etwas Nichtexistierendes denjenigen, der existiert, schafft.¹⁰⁰

Wie wir bereits gesehen haben, ermöglicht Eunomius' ontologische Skala offenbar ein nuancenreicheres als ein solch bipolares Verständnis und zudem ist es gar nicht sicher, dass er den Vater überhaupt als selbstständige ontologische Stufe neben den drei Wesen auffassen wollte. Zumindest sagt er nichts dergleichen.

Die Unklarheit hinsichtlich der Identität des Schöpfers, auf die wir früher gestoßen sind, stört Gregor offensichtlich nicht so sehr wie die Vorstellung, dass somit (seiner Rekonstruktion nach) laut Eunomius der Schöpfer aller Dinge, d. h. Gott Logos, eigentlich aus etwas Nichtseiendem entstanden ist.¹⁰¹ Auch sein Werk wäre dann bloßes Nichts (οὐδέν), da auch hier das Werk offensichtlich der Aktivität entsprechen müsste, die es schafft, d. h. völliger Nichtexistenz (ἀνυπαρξία).¹⁰² Ja, eigentlich würde der Sohn selbst gar nicht sein, denn das, was aus Nichtseiendem entsteht, ist nicht.¹⁰³

(111) Was die Namen „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ angeht, beinhaltet Gregors Position eine zweifache Behauptung, die zum einen die Referenz oder die „Bedeutung“ betrifft, zum anderen den „Sinn“. Beide Titel haben seiner Überzeugung nach dieselbe Referenz oder „Bedeutung“: „Vater ist derselbe wie Ungeborener.“¹⁰⁴ Wenn „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ nicht derselbe sind, dann wird der Sohn des Vaters nicht Sohn des Ungeborenen sein und es gibt entweder zwei Söhne oder der Sohn wird zum Ungeborenen nicht jene Beziehung haben.¹⁰⁵ Dann wird der Vater zudem nicht ungeboren, sondern geboren (γεννητός) sein.¹⁰⁶

100 CE I 251 (GNO I, 100,6–9): εἰ δὲ ... ἀνυπόστατόν τι πράγμα λέγοι τὴν ἐνέργειαν, ἥς ἀποτέλεσμα τὸν υἱὸν διορίζεται, πάλιν εἰπάτω πῶς ἔπεται τῷ ὄντι τὸ μὴ ὄν, πῶς δὲ κατεργάζεται τὸν ὑφεστῶτα τὸ μὴ ὑφεστός.

101 CE I 252 (GNO I, 100,18): ἀνυπαρκτῷ τινὶ καὶ ἀνυποστάτῳ πράγματι.

102 CE I 253 (GNO I, 100,23–101,4).

103 CE I 258 (GNO I, 102,3–9).

104 CE I 553 (GNO I, 186,16 f.): τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ πατέρα εἶναι καὶ ἀγέννητον. CE I 557 (GNO I, 187,15 f.): ταὐτὸν σημαίνει τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὄνομα.

105 CE I 613–614 (GNO I, 203,16–204,4).

106 CE I 615 (GNO I, 204,4–9).

Neben der Übereinstimmung der Referenz sind jedoch für Gregor beide Namen zudem in gewissem Maße auch in ihrem „Sinn“ gleich, sofern nämlich beide die „Ursache des Seins“ ausdrücken:

Wenn wir ‚Vater‘ hören, denken wir sogleich an die Ursache des Seins (τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι) aller Dinge. Wenn er irgendeine andere übergeordnete Ursache hätte, würde er nicht im eigentlichen Sinne ‚Vater‘ heißen, denn diese Bezeichnung müsste im eigentlichen Sinne auf jene vorausgesetzte Ursache übertragen werden. Sofern er die Ursache von allem ist und aus ihm alles hervorgeht, wie der Apostel sagt (vgl. 1 Kor 8,6), dann wäre nichts vorstellbar, was seiner Existenz vorausgeht. Und dasselbe bedeutet zu glauben, dass er als ‚Ungeborener‘ existiert.¹⁰⁷

Zugleich aber stimmen beide Namen nicht in jeder Hinsicht überein, denn der „Ungeborene“ drückt nur aus, dass er „nicht aus irgendetwas hervorgeht“, während „Vater“ zudem die Beziehung zum Sohn impliziert.¹⁰⁸ Der Titel „Vater“ umfasst so nach Gregors Verständnis beide angeführten Aspekte, d. h. dass dessen Träger der „Ungeborene“ ist und auch dass er eine Beziehung zum Sohn hat.

Der Ausdruck ‚Vater‘ bedeutet zum einen, dass er ungeboren existiert, zum anderen drückt er in einem weiteren Sinne (καθ’ ἕτερον ἐνδείκνυσθαι σημαίνονμενον) die Nähe zum Sohn aus.¹⁰⁹

Der Ausdruck ‚Vater‘ drückt beides aus, zum einen, dass aus ihm alles hervorgeht und zwar vor allem der eingeborene Sohn, durch den alles ist (vgl. 1 Kor 8,6), zum anderen, dass er keine übergeordnete Ursache hat.¹¹⁰

107 CE I 548 (GNO I, 184,26–185,5): πατέρα γὰρ ἀκούσαντες τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι τοῖς πᾶσιν εὐθὺς ἐνόησαμεν, ὃς εἴπερ ἄλλην τινὰ ὑπερκειμένην αἰτίαν εἶχεν, οὐκ ἂν κυρίως πατὴρ ὠνομάσθη, ἐπὶ τὴν προνοηθεῖσαν αἰτίαν τῆς κυρίας τοῦ πατρὸς κλήσεως ἐπανιούσης. εἰ δὲ αὐτὸς πάντων αἴτιος καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα, καθὼς φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολος, δηλονότι τῆς ἐκείνου ὑπάρξεως οὐδὲν προεπινοηθῆναι δύναται. τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τὸ ἀγεννήτως εἶναι πιστεῦεσθαι.

108 CE I 557 (GNO I, 187,15–19): ὅτι καὶ ταῦτόν σημαίνει τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὄνομα, καὶ τὸ ἀγέννητον τὸ ἐξ οὐδενὸς εἶναι τὸν πατέρα παρίστησι, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τὴν περὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς ἔννοιαν συνημμένως διὰ τῆς σχέσεως μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ συνεισάγει.

109 CE I 567 (GNO I, 190,9–12): καὶ τὸ ἀγεννήτως αὐτὸν εἶναι σημαίνεσθαι διὰ τῆς προσηγορίας τοῦ πατρὸς οὐκ ἀρνήσεται, καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν οἰκειότητα καθ’ ἕτερον ἐνδείκνυσθαι σημαίνονμενον.

110 CE I 575 (GNO I, 192,10–14): διπλοῦν ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι τὸ σημαίνονμενον τίθεται, ἐν μὲν τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου τὰ πάντα καὶ πρὸ πάντων τὸν υἱὸν (τὸν) μονογενῆ, δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα, σημαίνεσθαι, ἕτερον δὲ τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτὸν ὑπερκειμένην αἰτίαν ἔχειν. Vgl. ähnlich CE I 576 (GNO I, 192,16–18); CE I 580–581 (GNO I, 193,23–30); CE I 604 (GNO I, 200,16–19).

Der Titel „Vater“ hat also nicht nur dieselbe Referenz wie der „Ungeborene“, sondern umfasst zudem das „Ungeborensein“ als bestimmte Komponente seines Inhalts oder „Sinns“.¹¹¹

Gregor führt zur Erklärung das Beispiel des Kaisers (βασιλεύς) an, der sowohl „souveräner Herrscher“ (αὐτοκράτωρ) oder „niemandem Untergeordneter“ (ἀδέσποτος), als auch „Herr der Untertanen“ (τῶν ὑποχειρίων ἡγούμενος) genannt werden kann. Ohne jegliche Absurdität können wir dabei sagen, dass der Ausdruck „Kaiser“ beide Aspekte zugleich meint (σημαίνει), nämlich dass er „niemandem unterliegt“ und dass er „über die Untertanen herrscht“.¹¹² Der Titel „Kaiser“ ist nämlich ein „mittleres“ oder „vermittelndes Glied“ (μέσον) und drückt einmal das eine, ein anderes Mal das andere aus,¹¹³ freilich ohne dass beide Titel völlig austauschbar wären.¹¹⁴

Auf ähnliche Weise umfasst laut Gregor wohl auch der Titel „Vater“ als mittleres Glied zum einen Ungeborenheit, zum anderen die Beziehung zum Sohn. Das Problem freilich besteht darin, dass dieses „mittlere Glied“ keine eigene Benennung hat, sondern dass seine Bezeichnung von einem der Aspekte übernommen wurde, der keinen anderen Namen hat („Vater“ des Sohnes). Wenn wir also sagen: „Ungeborener“ ist dasselbe wie „Vater“, so ist nicht klar, ob es nur um dieselbe Referenz zweier unterschiedlicher Aspekte geht („Morgenröte“ ist dasselbe wie „Abendröte“), oder ob hier ein bestimmter Aspekt seiner Referenz zugeordnet wird („Morgenröte“ ist dasselbe wie die Venus).

Noch deutlicher wird dieses Problem in Gregors zweitem Beispiel: Vom Brot gilt zum einen, dass es aus Korn gemacht, zum anderen, dass es essbar ist. Diese beiden Vorstellungen (ἔννοιαι) können durch den Ausdruck „Brot“ impliziert werden, ohne sich auszuschließen.¹¹⁵ In diesem Beispiel haben wir freilich klar ein „mittleres Glied“, welches das „Brot“ ist, und seine zwei Aspekte, „aus Korn gemacht“ und „essbar“, die sich gewiss nicht ausschließen, ohne freilich dasselbe oder austauschbar zu sein. Ihre völlige Synonymie zu behaupten, wäre zumindest strittig. Gregor ist sich dieses Problems selbst bewusst, wenn er an anderer Stelle anführt, dass die zwei Aspekte des Namens „Adam“, der zum einen den „ersten Menschen“, zum anderen den „Vater anderer Menschen“

111 CE I 555 (GNO I, 187,3–5): τοῦ ἀγεννήτου τὴν ἔννοιαν ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς προσηγορίας παρίστασθαι.

112 CE I 554 (GNO I, 186,20–28); CE I 604 (GNO I, 200,12–15).

113 CE I 554 (GNO I, 186,28–30): μέσον γὰρ ἑκατέρων τῶν ὑπολήψεων ὃν τῆς βασιλείας τὸ ὄνομα πῇ μὲν τὸ ἀδέσποτον, πῇ δὲ τὸ ἀρχικὸν τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἐνδείκνυται.

114 CE I 605 (GNO I, 200,19–25).

115 CE I 561 (GNO I, 188,19–26).

(oder „Vater des Abel“) bezeichnet, nicht beliebig austauschbar sind.¹¹⁶ Auch in diesem Fall gibt es jedoch ein „mittleres Glied“ – „Adam“ – auf das sich beide Charakteristiken beziehen.¹¹⁷ Solch ein klares „mittleres Glied“ freilich fehlt im Falle der Titel „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“, was offenbar Quelle der Kritik des Eunomius ist.

Falls Gregor meint, dass „Gott des Universums“ im Falle der Titel „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ dieses mittlere Glied ist, wie es an manchen Stellen den Anschein hat,¹¹⁸ dann scheitert seine Auslegung offenbar wegen der Konfusion Gottes mit der Person des Vaters und es kann erneut gesagt werden, dass der „Ungeborene“ sich selbst gezeugt hat.

Wie auch immer: es ist gewiss nicht ausgeschlossen, dass Eunomius nicht so sehr einen Unterschied der Referenz zwischen „Ungeborenem“ und „Vater“ einzuführen beabsichtigte, wie Gregor ihn versteht (oder ihm unterstellt), sondern nur darauf aufmerksam machen wollte, dass der Aspekt beider Titel ein anderer ist (auch wenn sie ein und denselben Träger haben sollten), und dass es deshalb nicht möglich ist, den einen ohne Weiteres auf den anderen zu übertragen oder beide auszutauschen.

Eunomius' Polemik gegen Basilius muss daher nicht den unangebrachten Grundsatz implizieren, den ihm Gregor zuschreibt, nämlich dass „dasjenige, was einen Aspekt gemeinsam hat, in allen Aspekten dasselbe meinen muss“.¹¹⁹ Vielleicht wollte er das Gleiche ausdrücken, was in gewissem Maße auch Gregor selbst zugibt, nämlich dass es bei beiden Titeln um zwei unterschiedliche Aspekte oder einen doppelten „Sinn“¹²⁰ ein und derselben Referenz geht.

Die doppelte Hinsicht des Titels „Vater“ erklärt Gregor selbst am Ende anders, nämlich mit Hilfe der Unterscheidung (die schon Basilius machte) zwischen Benennungen, die absolute Bedeutung haben (*ἀπόλυτά τε καὶ ἄσχετα*), und Namen, die eine Beziehung aussagen (*πρὸς τινα σχέσιν ὀνομασμένα*).¹²¹

116 CE I 609–610 (GNO I, 202,5–19).

117 CE I 611 (GNO I, 202,24–26).

118 CE I 611 (GNO I, 202,26–203,5).

119 CE I 559 (GNO I, 188,10–12): τὸ κατὰ τι κοινωνοῦν καὶ διὰ πάντων τὴν κατὰ τὸ σημαίνονμενον κοινωνίαν ἔχειν.

120 CE I 567 (GNO I, 190,11 f.): καθ' ἕτερον ... σημαίνονμενον.

121 CE I 568 (GNO I, 190,20 f.). Auch Basilius unterscheidet absolut benutzte Namen, die ihren Träger kennzeichnen (τὰ μὲν ἀπολελυμένως καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ προφερόμενα, τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστὶ σημαντικά), wie „Mensch“, „Pferd“, „Stier“, und Namen, die eine Beziehung ausdrücken (τὰ δὲ, πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα, τὴν σχέσιν μόνην ἐμφαίνει τὴν πρὸς ἃ λέγεται), wie „Sohn“, „Sklave“ oder „Freund“, vgl. AE II 9,11–18 (SC 305, 36). Ziel seiner Auslegung ist es zu zeigen, dass der Name „Gezeugter“ (γέννημα) ein Relativum ist und kein

Einige dieser zweitgenannten können zudem nach Absicht des Sprechers sowohl absolut als auch relativ benutzt werden.¹²² In den Aussagen über Gott ist Beispiel für absolute Namen „Unverletzbarer“, „Ewiger“, „Unsterblicher“,¹²³ Beispiel für die relativen „Helfer“ (βοηθός), „Verteidiger“ (ὑπερασπιστής) „Beschützer“ (ἀντιλήπτωρ).¹²⁴ Die Namen „Gott“ (θεός) oder „gut“ (ἀγαθός) endlich können sowohl absolut als auch relativ benutzt werden (z. B. „unser Gott“, Offb 4,11).¹²⁵ In ähnlicher Weise kann auch der Titel „Vater“ absolut (z. B. Röm 8,15) oder relativ („unser Vater“, z. B. Mt 6,9) stehen.¹²⁶ Genauso kann er als relativer Name die Beziehung zum Sohn ausdrücken oder in absoluter Benutzung die Absenz einer übergeordneten Ursache bezeichnen (τὸ μὴ ἐξ αἰτίας ὑπερκειμένης εἶναι),¹²⁷ d. h. denjenigen benennen, dem nichts vorausgeht, der als Ewiger keinen Anfang und keine Grenze hat.¹²⁸

Gregors Festhalten an der Zweideutigkeit des Titels „Vater“ bedeutet somit wohl vor allem, dass beide Aspekte („ungeboren“ und „Vater“ des Sohnes sein) in seinen Augen untrennbar sind. Gott, wie ihn Gregor versteht, war schon seit jeher Vater des Sohnes, ist nicht erst nachträglich zu ihm geworden, so als hätte er damit erst etwas erreicht, was er zuvor nicht war, sei es nun etwas Besseres oder Schlechteres (beides ist in Gregors Augen absurd).¹²⁹ Daraus leitet sich für Gregor auch ab, dass der Vater immer zusammen mit dem Sohn ist, da ohne ihn der Titel „Vater“ seinen Sinn verlieren würde. Dem Sohn gebührt dabei alles, was dem Vater zukommt, dem Vater alles, was dem Sohn gehört, und doch ist der Sohn nicht der Vater und der Vater nicht der Sohn.¹³⁰

Wesen (οὐσία) ausdrücken kann. Er fügt außerdem hinzu, dass auch absolute Namen, nicht das Wesen selbst ausdrücken können, sondern nur ihre charakteristischen Züge (ἰδιώματα τινα περὶ αὐτήν). Vgl. *AE* II 9,18–27 (*SC* 305, 36–38). Zu den Sprachtheorien, an die Basilios anknüpft, vgl. M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Leiden 2010, 212–253.

122 *CE* I 569 (*GNO* I, 190,21–25).

123 *CE* I 570 (*GNO* I, 191,2–5).

124 *CE* I 571 (*GNO* I, 191,7–11).

125 *CE* I 571–572 (*GNO* I, 191,11–19).

126 *CE* I 572–573 (*GNO* I, 191,20–23).

127 *CE* I 573 (*GNO* I, 191,23–192,2).

128 *CE* I 574 (*GNO* I, 192,2–8).

129 *CE* I 583–584 (*GNO* I, 194,15–195,5).

130 *CE* I 593–594 (*GNO* I, 197,2–17).

Gregors Vorstellung des Vaters

Gregor wirft Eunomius unter anderem vor, dass er die biblischen Titel „Vater“, „Sohn“ und „Geist“ verlässt und statt dessen von drei Wesen, in ihrem Sein entsprechend den Ursprungsrelationen abgestuft, spricht, so wie oben von ihnen die Rede war.¹³¹ Bereits damit verschleiert er laut Gregor die „enge und natürliche Beziehung“ zwischen Vater und Sohn,¹³² d. h. die „Verwandtschaft“ oder die „Nähe ihrer Natur“,¹³³ die „Einheit der Natur, die in beiden Trägern ist“,¹³⁴ oder die Einheit „im Sinne desselben Wesens“.¹³⁵

Während also Eunomius in den biblischen Bezeichnungen vor allen die Abhängigkeit des Sohnes vom Vater betont, von der er auch eine ontologische Untergeordnetheit des zweiten Wesens gegenüber dem ersten ableitet (wie es in der platonischen Tradition üblich ist)¹³⁶ – unterstreicht Gregor im Gegenteil dieselbe Natur, die durch die Zeugung übertragen wird (so wie auch Aristoteles davon spricht).¹³⁷ Mit diesem Argument lässt sich nicht ohne Weiteres auch dieselbe Natur des Geistes stützen, deshalb beschränkt sich Gregor in dieser Frage darauf, zu erklären, dass die Reihenfolge der Hypostasen keine Unterordnung impliziert.¹³⁸

Gregors eigene Vorstellung des Vaters geht aus der Unterscheidung zwischen „Ungeschaffenheit“ und „Ungeborenheit“ hervor, die Eunomius nicht vornimmt.¹³⁹ Zusammen mit dem Sohn und dem Geist ist der Vater laut Gregor ungeschaffen (ἄκτιστος), zugleich aber – im Unterschied zum Sohn – auch ungeboren (ἀγέννητος). „Ungeborener“ und „Vater“ zu sein, ist seine persönliche und unübertragbare Charakteristik (ιδιότης oder ἰδιόν τε καὶ ἀκοινωνητον),

131 CE I 156 (GNO I, 74,1–10).

132 CE I 159 (GNO I, 75,4 f.): τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῶν καὶ φυσικὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλα σχέσιν.

133 CE I 159 (GNO I, 75,6): τὸ τῆς φύσεως συγγενές. CE I 188 (GNO I, 81,29): τὸ οἰκείον τῆς φύσεως αὐτῶν.

134 CE I 498 (GNO I, 170,13 f.): ἐν δύο τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις τὴν ἐνότητά τῆς φύσεως.

135 CE I 500 (GNO I, 171,1 f.): κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτήν.

136 Vgl. beispielsweise Porphyrios, *Sent.* 13: „Alles, was aus seinem Wesen zeugt, zeugt etwas Schlechteres, als es selbst ist“ (Πᾶν τὸ γεννῶν τῇ οὐσίᾳ αὐτοῦ χειρόν ἑαυτοῦ γεννᾷ). Siehe auch unten, Anm. 157. Eunomius wehrt sich freilich gegen die Vorstellung einer Zeugung aus dem eigenen Wesen, die er durch die Aktivität des Willens ersetzt, vgl. oben, Anm. 42 und 45.

137 CE I 214–215 (GNO I, 89,3–14). Vgl. Aristoteles, *Phys.* II,2, 194b13; *Met.* VII,7, 1032a25.

138 CE I 201 (GNO I, 85,8–14).

139 Der Ausdruck ἀγέν[ν]ητος bedeutete freilich im Griechischen vor dem arianischen Streit sowohl „Ungeborenheit“ als auch „Unentstandenheit, Ungeschaffenheit“, vgl. P. Stiegele, *Der Agennesiebegriff in der griechischen Theologie des vierten Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der trinitarischen Terminologie*, Freiburg i. B. 1913.

die ihn von den anderen beiden Hypostasen unterscheidet.¹⁴⁰ Ähnlich ist es die persönliche Charakteristik des Sohnes, „Sohn“ und „Einziggeborener“ (υἱὸς καὶ μονογενής) zu sein.¹⁴¹ Der Geist, der weder „Ungeborener“ noch „Einziggeborener“ ist, wird als derjenige charakterisiert, „der auf andere Weise als der Einziggeborene aus dem Vater erstanden und der durch den Sohn selbst geöffnet ist“.¹⁴²

Der Ausdruck „Ungeborener“ ist gewiss dem Vater vorbehalten. Was jedoch den Begriff „ohne Anfang“ (τὸ ἀναρχον) anbelangt, gibt Gregor dessen Mehrdeutigkeit zu, die es erlaubt, ihn manchmal auch dem Sohne zuzuschreiben. Sofern damit die Absenz einer Ursache gemeint sein sollte, so gebührt er gewiss nur dem Vater. Sofern er aber die Absenz einer Entstehung, der die Schöpfung unterliegt, ausdrückt, so kann er völlig zu Recht auch vom Sohne ausgesagt werden.¹⁴³

Von dem, der nicht ohne Anfang ist, sofern es um seine Hypostase geht (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ὑποστάσεως), bekennen wir in jedem anderen Aspekt, dass er ohne Anfang ist. Während also der Vater ohne Anfang ist und ungeboren (ἀναρχον καὶ ἀγέννητον), ist der Sohn ohne Anfang im angeführten Sinn, nicht aber ungeboren.¹⁴⁴

Mit Hilfe dieser Unterscheidung zwischen „ungeboren“ und „ohne Anfang“ ist es sicher möglich den Absurditäten, die Eunomius aus der Wesensgleichheit von Vater und Sohn ableitet, aus dem Wege zu gehen. Sofern wir nämlich die Gottheit zwar als „ohne Anfang“ in der Bedeutung der Absenz der Entstehung, nicht aber als „ungeboren“ (was ein dem Vater vorbehaltener Titel ist) verstehen, dann muss weder der Sohn zugleich „Ungeborener“ sein, noch der Sohn sich selbst gebären.

Gregor betont in seiner Antwort auf die Deduktionen des Eunomius vor allem, dass es nicht um zwei verschiedene Wesen geht, die ungeboren sind.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ CE I 278 (GNO I, 107,23–108,3).

¹⁴¹ CE I 279 (GNO I, 108,3–6).

¹⁴² CE I 280 (GNO I, 108,18–109,1): τῷ ἰδιάζοντι, ἐν τῷ μήτε μονογενῶς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑποστῆναι καὶ ἐν τῷ δι' αὐτοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ πεφνηέναι.

¹⁴³ CE I 467–468 (GNO I, 162,7–19).

¹⁴⁴ CE I 469 (GNO I, 162,19–23): ὥστε τὸν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ὑποστάσεως μὴ ἀναρχον ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν ὁμολογούμενον ἔχειν τὸ ἀναρχον, καὶ τὸν μὲν πατέρα καὶ ἀναρχον καὶ ἀγέννητον, τὸν δὲ υἱὸν ἀναρχον μὲν κατὰ τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον, οὐ μὴν καὶ ἀγέννητον. Zur Absenz von Anfang und Ende des göttlichen Wesens vgl. auch CE I 676 (GNO I, 220,20–27).

¹⁴⁵ CE I 484–485 (GNO I, 166,20–167,11).

Dem Sohn kommt der Titel „Ungeborener“ nicht zu, der dem Vater vorbehalten bleibt; daraus freilich leitet sich für Gregor (im Unterschied zu Eunomius) keine Verschiedenheit der Wesen ab, sondern der Hypostasen, wie wir bereits wissen.¹⁴⁶ Dasselbe Wesen impliziert gewiss weder die Absenz eines Anfangs für alle Träger noch eine Autogenese, wie Gregor am Beispiel mehrerer Menschen belegt, die ebenfalls dasselbe Wesen teilen (τὸ κοινὸν τῆς οὐσίας), d.h. die menschliche Natur (ἡ ἀνθρώπινη φύσις),¹⁴⁷ definiert als „sterblich“ und „vernunftbegabt“.¹⁴⁸

Die einzelnen Wesen (z.B. Baum oder Tier) weisen bestimmte Erkennungsmerkmale auf, nach denen die Charakteristik der ihnen eigenen Natur identifizierbar ist.¹⁴⁹ Wenn gilt, dass Ungeborenheit (ἀγεννησία) und Geborenheit (γέννησις) unterschiedliche Wesen sind, müssten sie auch verschiedene, ja gegensätzliche Erkennungsmerkmale vorweisen.¹⁵⁰ „Ungeboren“ und „geboren“ begründen jedoch keinen Unterschied in der Natur, die ein und dieselbe bleibt, sofern es um Göttlichkeit, Heiligkeit, Güte usw. geht.¹⁵¹ Falls wir annehmen, es handle sich um einen Gegensatz (so wie Feuer und Eis gegensätzlich sind), würden wir laut Gregor beim Manichäismus ankommen.¹⁵²

Der Titel „Vater“, benutzt für den ungeborenen Gott, kann laut Gregor dennoch nicht die Vorstellung eines größeren „Alters“ (τὸ πρεσβύτερον) implizieren. Die ungeschaffene Natur nämlich entzieht sich völlig der Zeit, es gibt hier kein Intervall, das von zwei Ereignissen beschränkt ist (sonst könnte auch der Vater nicht „ungeboren“ sein, sondern hätte irgendeinen Anfang).¹⁵³ Auch gibt es hier kein Intervall einer ontologischen Verschiedenheit zwischen Ungeschaffenem und Geschaffenem (d.h. Unbegrenztem und Begrenztem), durch welches laut Gregor die Zeit letztlich begründet ist.¹⁵⁴ Der Begriff „Vater“ drückt laut Gregors

146 CE I 488–489 (GNO I, 167,26–168,8); CE I 503 (GNO I, 172,1–3).

147 CE I 495 (GNO I, 169,14–19).

148 CE I 496 (GNO I, 170,3f.).

149 CE I 511 (GNO I, 174,4f.): γνωρίσματα, δι' ὧν τὸ ἰδιάζον τῆς ὑποκειμένης ἐπιγινώσκεται φύσεως.

150 CE I 512–513 (GNO I, 174,14–23).

151 CE I 516 (GNO I, 175,15–28).

152 CE I 517–518 (GNO I, 175,30–176,20). Zum Arsenal der häresiologischen Invektive Gregors, unter denen die Beschuldigung Eunomius' des Manichäismus einen wichtigen Platz einnimmt, vgl. M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse. Polémique littéraire et exégèse dans le Contre Eunome*, Paris 2012, 98f.

153 CE I 341–358 (GNO I, 128,8–133,7).

154 CE I 359–385 (GNO I, 133,8–140,2). Mit dieser Frage habe ich mich an anderer Stelle auseinandergesetzt, vgl. L. Karfiková, „Der Vater ist nicht älter als der Sohn. Gregor von Nyssa, Contra Eunomium, I, 341–385,“ in: Y. de Andia – P.L. Hofrichter (Hrsg.), *Christus bei den Vätern. Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glau-*

Verständnis neben einer gemeinsamen Natur auch ein kausales, nicht jedoch ein zeitliches oder ontologisches Vorausgehen gegenüber dem Sohn als Verursachtem aus.¹⁵⁵ Der ungeborene Vater und der eingeborene Sohn müssen als gleichewig existierend verstanden werden, obgleich der eine aus dem anderen geboren wurde.¹⁵⁶

Schluss

In Gregors erstem Buch gegen Eunomius lässt sich also eine dreifache Vorstellung vom Vater unterscheiden: (1) die nach Eunomius selbst, soweit es möglich ist sie zu rekonstruieren, des Weiteren (2) Gregors (Des) Interpretation der Position des Eunomius und zuletzt (3) Gregors Auslegung.

- (1) Eunomius selbst (zumindest wie ich ihn zu verstehen versuche) hat sich wahrscheinlich vorgestellt, dass „Vater“ ein bestimmter Aspekt des ersten und höchsten Wesens ist, nämlich seine verursachende Beziehung gegenüber dem zweiten Wesen, dem „Sohn“. Diesen Aspekt, der eine Art Außenwirkung ausdrückt, nennt Eunomius auch „Aktivität“, die das Wesen „begleitet“ (in seiner ersten *Apologie* erklärt Eunomius, dass es sich weder um das Verhältnis einer biologischen Zeugung noch um die Übertragung desselben Wesens handelt, sondern um eine Aktivität des Willens). Dieses „Begleiten“ ist freilich nicht „äußerlich“ in dem Sinne, dass es etwas vom Wesen Verschiedenes wäre. Während der „Ungeborene“ eine distinktive Kennzeichnung des ersten Wesens ist, betrifft der Name „Vater“ diese Aktivität. Beide Aspekte sind nicht ein und dasselbe, und deshalb sind diese Namen nicht völlig synonym und nicht austauschbar. Das erste Wesen hat nur eine solche „erste Aktivität“, die ihm eigen ist. Dasselbe gilt auch von dem zweiten Wesen, das durch seine „erste Aktivi-

bens, Innsbruck – Wien 2004 (Pro Oriente, Bd. XXVII, Wiener Patristische Tagungen, 1), 271–289. Vgl. auch D.L. Balás, „Eternity and Time in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*“, in: H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (Hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie. Zweites internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa, Freckenhorst bei Münster, 18.–23. September 1972*, Leiden 1976, 128–155 (bes. 131–135); T.P. Verghese, „Διάστημα and διάτασις in Gregory of Nyssa“, in: H. Dörrie – M. Altenburger – U. Schramm (Hrsg.), *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie*, 243–260 (bes. 249–251).

155 CE I 361 (GNO I, 134,1f.): τὸ μὲν αἴτιον, τὸ δὲ ἐξ αἰτίου τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἀδιαστάτως ἔχειν.

156 CE I 382 (GNO I, 139,2–4): τῇ μὲν ἀγεννησίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ τοῦ μονογενοῦς αἰδιότης γεννητῶς συνεπινοεῖται.

tät“ das dritte Wesen verursacht. Unklar bleibt in unserem Text, wie in diesen Rahmen (der in vielem an die neuplatonische Ontologie erinnert)¹⁵⁷ die schöpferische Aktivität in ihrer Vielfalt passt. Nach anderen Erklärungen des Eunomius ist sie nicht Aktivität des dritten Wesens – wie es die Logik des Systems am ehesten erfordern würde – sondern des zweiten, dessen schöpferische Aktivität freilich in dem ersten Wesen begründet ist, das dessen Ursache ist.

- (2) Gregor interpretiert die Position des Eunomius in dem Sinne, dass zwischen dem „Wesen“ und seiner „ersten Aktivität“ ein Verhältnis der Verschiedenheit und der äußeren Begleitung besteht. „Ungeborener“ ist somit Name des ersten und höchsten Wesens, während „Vater“ eine Art Instrument ist, das zwischen dem ersten und dem zweiten Wesen steht, ohne mit dem einen oder dem anderen identisch zu sein. Eunomius' Bemühen, die Synonymie der Begriffe „Vater“ und „Ungeborener“ als zwei unterschiedliche Aspekte zu widerlegen, wertet Gregor als Einführung zweier unterschiedlicher Referenzen.
- (3) Gregor selbst lehnt vor allem die Vorstellung dreier ontologisch abgestufter „Wesen“ ab und spricht lieber von drei „Hypostasen“ derselben Natur mit unterschiedlichen „charakteristischen Zeichen“. Die Charakteristik „Ungeborener“ gebührt nur der ersten Hypostase, genau wie der Name „Vater“, der außer der „Ungeborenheit“ zugleich die Beziehung zum Sohn ausdrückt. Zudem erfasst der Name „Vater“ neben beiden angeführten Aspekten der Ursächlichkeit (Absenz einer höheren Ursache und Beziehung der Verursachung gegenüber dem Sohne) auch die Nähe, ja die Identität der Naturen von Vater und Sohn, wie es die Metapher der biologischen Zeugung andeutet. „Ungeborenheit“ und „Geborenheit“ drücken damit keine Verschiedenheit aus, sondern im Gegenteil die Identität der

¹⁵⁷ Vgl. Plotin, *Enn.* v,1(10) zur Vorstellung von drei Hypostasen, die nach dem Verhältnis der Abgeleitetheit ontologisch geordnet sind. Plotin spricht auch von „Aktivität“, die eine immer niedrigere ontologische Ebene begründet, der Unterschied besteht freilich darin, dass er eine innere Aktivität (d. h. Verwirklichung des eigenen Wesens) und eine äußere, die als eine Art Ausstrahlung eine ontologisch niedrigere Stufe begründet, unterscheidet, vgl. z. B. *Enn.* v 4(7),2,27–39; iv 3(27),10,31–32.35–36; v 3(49),7,13–25. Siehe hierzu Ch. Rutten, „La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin“, *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Etranger* 146 (1956) 100–106. Ein direkter Einfluss Plotins auf Eunomius ist nicht sonderlich wahrscheinlich, die Diskussion zur schwierigen Frage seiner philosophischen Quellen wird zusammengefasst von X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire*, 135–149.

Natur. Die ontologische Abgeleitetheit begründet deshalb keine Hierarchie des Seins, das laut Gregor nicht abstufbar ist, obgleich das Sein in „Ungeschaffenes“ und „Geschaffenes“ (und dieses zweite weiter in Intelligibles und sinnlich Wahrnehmbares) unterteilt wird.

Wir sehen, dass das grundsätzlich unterschiedliche Verständnis der Trinität bei beiden Autoren Hand in Hand geht mit einem sehr unterschiedlichen ontologischen Konzept. Während Eunomius drei ontologische Stufen der drei Wesen, gegeben durch das Verhältnis der Abgeleitetheit (ähnlich den Vorstellungen der Neuplatoniker) voraussetzt, geht Gregor vom Begriff des Seins aus, das nicht abstufbar ist, sondern nur eine bloße Negation im Sinne völliger Nichtexistenz zulässt (sein Begriff des „Wesens“ als Träger weiterer Bestimmungen ist im Grunde aristotelisch). Der Benutzung des Begriffs „Wesen“ für die einzelnen Hypostasen der Gottheit geht Gregor eindeutig aus dem Weg, wohl insbesondere wegen eines möglichen Verständnisses des „Wesens“ im Sinne der zweiten aristotelischen *ousia* oder Natur.

Ein interessanter Aspekt der gesamten Polemik ist auch die semantische Frage von Bedeutungsgleichheit im Sinne derselben Referenz (oder „Bedeutung“) versus völlige Synonymie oder Austauschbarkeit der Teilaspekte („Sinn“), die auf dieselbe Referenz bezogen sind. Gerade diese Unklarheit (die zu beseitigen es meiner Meinung nach keinem der Autoren gelungen ist) ist auch neuralgischer Punkt in der Polemik hinsichtlich der Beziehung der Begriffe „Ungeborener“ und „Vater“. Wenn ich Eunomius richtig verstehe, fassen beide Autoren diese Benennung am Ende als verschiedene Aspekte derselben Referenz auf, nicht als zwei austauschbare Aspekte und auch nicht als zwei Charakteristiken ganz verschiedener Referenzen.

Dieses Missverständnis droht geradezu einen ernsteren Unterschied zu verdecken – die Frage nämlich, ob der Begriff „Ungeborener“ ausschließliche Charakteristik des Vaters ist (wie Gregor zusammen mit Basilius meint) oder der Gottheit als solcher (wie Eunomius überzeugt ist). Um den Ausschluss von Sohn und Geist aus der Gottheit zu verhindern, ersetzt Gregor den Begriff „ungeboren“ durch den Ausdruck „ungeschaffen“ oder „ohne Anfang“ (im Sinne von „ungeschaffen“).

Unterschiedlich ist offenbar auch die Betonung, die beide Autoren auf den Titel „Vater“ selbst legen. Während er für Eunomius einen bestimmten Aspekt („erste Aktivität“) des ersten Wesens ausdrückt, dessen Hauptcharakteristik die „Ungeborenheit“ bleibt, drückt dieser Name für Gregor einen nicht hinwegzudenkenden Beziehungscharakter Gottes aus, die Bindung zum Sohn, die Gott seit jeher zum Vater macht.

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La distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος dans le *Contra Eunomium* I

Xavier Batllo

Le lecteur de l'*Apologie* d'Eunome ne peut manquer d'être surpris par le *Contre Eunome* I de Grégoire de Nysse. En effet, Eunome introduisait, presque dès le début des investigations théologiques de son *Apologie*, le concept ἀγέννητος et développait ensuite de longues réflexions liées à ce terme, ainsi qu'à l'opposition γεννητός/ἀγέννητος¹, positions contre lesquelles s'était dressé Basile dans son *Contre Eunome*. Tout pouvait donc laisser supposer un débat très serré autour de ces notions dans la nouvelle étape de la controverse qui oppose cette fois Eunome à Grégoire de Nysse. Pourtant, le terme ἀγέννητος, si important dans la théologie d'Eunome, n'apparaît pas dans les premières citations de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* faites par Grégoire dans le CE I², spécialement dans la première grande citation de la partie théologique de cette œuvre, appelée généralement fragment 1³. Dans ce passage, où Eunome veut récapituler sa doctrine⁴, le mot ἀγέννητος n'intervient pas une seule fois, ni d'ailleurs celui de γεννητός ou même ceux de Père, Fils et Esprit. Eunome adopte au contraire

1 Cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 7 (Vaggione 40,11) pour la première occurrence du mot ἀγέννητος (après les premiers chapitres consacrés au contexte de rédaction de l'œuvre et à l'énoncé d'une brève profession de foi) : Eunome présente ses réflexions sur le Dieu unique et inengendré, puis sur l'opposition γεννητός/ἀγέννητος, cf. *Apologie* 9s (Vaggione 42,1s).

2 Pour le repérage des citations de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* faites par Grégoire dans le CE, on se reportera aux indications données par W. Jaeger dans le GNO (passages imprimés en caractères plus espacés), ainsi qu'aux rectificatifs que je propose pour la partie théologique du CE I (CE I 147–691), cf. X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire et Polémique trinitaire. Le subordinatianisme d'Eunome et la distinction κτιστόν/ἄκτιστον dans le Contre Eunome I de Grégoire de Nysse*, Münster 2013, 52–83, spécialement 76–83.

3 Cf. CE I 151–155 (GNO I, 71,28–73,15). Le regroupement ainsi que la dénomination des citations de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* dans le CE par le terme *fragment* furent proposés par Th. Dams, *La controverse eunoméenne*, thèse non publiée de l'Institut Catholique de Paris 1951, 55–118 ; ce terme *fragment* était déjà utilisé par M. Albertz, *Untersuchungen über die Schriften des Eunomius*, Wittenberg 1908, 23 note 3, 24 note 1. B. Pottier reprend cette répartition en fragments tout en soulignant ses limites, cf. B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Étude systématique du « Contre Eunome » avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994, 21–22.

4 Cf. CE I 151 (GNO I, 71, 28–72, 1) : « Πᾶς ὁ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς δογμάτων συμπληροῦται λόγος κτλ. ».

un langage singulièrement abstrait et développe sa présentation autour des concepts d'οὐσία, ἐνέργεια et ὄνομα. Il en résulte que toute la partie suivante du CE I, où Grégoire réfute presque mot à mot ce fragment 1 de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, s'articule apparemment autour de thèmes étrangers à la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος. Il faut attendre en fait le CE I 477, c'est-à-dire assez loin dans l'œuvre de réfutation rédigée par Grégoire, pour rencontrer une première fois le concept ἀγέννητος dans une citation d'Eunome. Finalement, la polémique entre les deux auteurs sur ce terme (et la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος qui lui est liée) ne semble débiter véritablement qu'à partir du CE I 535; on touche alors presque à la fin de l'œuvre de Grégoire, qui compte 691 paragraphes, et le débat prend un tour principalement épistémologique. Tout inviterait donc à croire qu'une grande partie de la polémique qui oppose Grégoire et Eunome dans le CE I se joue principalement sur des problèmes théologiques autres que la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος. Bien sûr, il faut rappeler qu'on ne possède de ce premier volume de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* d'Eunome que les rares bribes transmises par Grégoire dans le CE I. Qu'en est-il de toutes les parties de cette œuvre d'Eunome laissées de côté et non reproduites par l'évêque de Nysse: peut-être Eunome y offrait-il des développements importants sur la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος? Pourtant, la remarque précédente sur le silence du fragment 1 n'en reste pas moins significative. Dès lors, si l'étude de la polémique entre Eunome et Grégoire autour du terme ἀγέννητος et de la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος dans le CE I paraît devoir se limiter aux questions épistémologiques traitées à la fin de l'œuvre, il semble important d'examiner si, malgré tout, il n'y a pas dans ce traité théologique complexe d'autres approches de cette opposition fondamentale γεννητός/ἀγέννητος.

Les questions sur le langage et la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος jouent un rôle déterminant à partir du CE I 535. Grégoire entame alors la réfutation des attaques d'Eunome contre Basile, lequel disait dans son traité *Contre Eunome* préférer le nom de Père au vocable ἀγέννητος⁵. S'il ne paraît pas nécessaire de revenir ici sur les positions épistémologiques d'Eunome, qui ont déjà été étudiées de très nombreuses fois⁶, il importe cependant de mentionner les

5 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 5 (SC 299, 174,63–176,75; 176,82–180,122). Grégoire indique clairement en CE I 535 qu'il vient d'achever une partie et aborde un nouveau thème théologique, cf. CE I 535 (GNO I, 181,12–18): «Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν εἰς τοσούτον. (...) φέρε καὶ ὅσα περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀγεννήτου φωνῆς συκοφαντῶν τὸν διδάσκαλον ἡμῶν καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐκείνον καὶ εἰς τὸν λόγον ἐξύβρισε, βραχέα διελέγχωμεν.»

6 On pourra se référer aux actes du colloque d'Olomuc (République Tchèque) consacré au CE II, où les questions épistémologiques jouent un rôle primordial, cf. L. Karfíková – S. Douglass – J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Suppor-*

explications qu'il apporte dans un passage du fragment 5⁷, où il précise le lien connaturel qui existe entre la substance de Dieu et l'appellation ἀγέννητος. Basile avait reproché à Eunome le peu de cohérence de ses propos sur ce point dans l'*Apologie*⁸ et c'est donc sans surprise qu'Eunome répond à cette attaque dans l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* en affirmant : « Le nom d'inengendré suit, puisque lui-même [Dieu] est inengendré »⁹.

La citation fournie par Grégoire est très brève et ne permet pas, en tant que telle, de reconstruire toute l'argumentation d'Eunome. Celui-ci semble cependant vouloir distinguer clairement ce qui relève de l'épistémologie de ce qui relève de la métaphysique¹⁰ et mettre en évidence leur adéquation dans le cas du nom ἀγέννητος : le nom ἀγέννητος signifie véritablement quelque chose de Dieu, « dit vraiment la substance »¹¹. Sans doute aurait-on aimé en savoir davantage et connaître plus de détails du raisonnement d'Eunome, qui rend compte ailleurs de façon plus décisive de cette relation entre le nom ἀγέννητος et la

ting Studies: Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomuc, September 15–18, 2004), Leiden 2007.

- 7 Les citations de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* regroupées sous le fragment 5 sont les suivantes : CE I 653 (GNO I, 214,6–10), 660 (GNO I, 216,12–13), 661 (GNO I, 216,16–22).
- 8 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 5 (SC 299, 176,82–180,122) : l'évêque de Césarée juge incohérente l'affirmation d'Eunome selon laquelle « la notion d'inengendré suit Dieu, ou plutôt Dieu est substance inengendrée », cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 7 (Vaggione 40,10–11) ; de fait, présentée ainsi, la position d'Eunome paraît une « logical gaffe », cf. M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Leiden 2010, 33.
- 9 CE I 661 (GNO I, 216,21–22) : « ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ ἀγέννητον ὄνομα, ἐπεὶ περ αὐτὸ ἐστὶν ἀγέννητος. » À quoi renvoie exactement le pronom αὐτό ? Il est possible de répondre à cette question en étudiant le même pronom, qui se trouve quelques lignes plus haut (GNO I, 216,16) : Grégoire reproduit là un passage de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, où Eunome cite en partie son *Apologie* : la leçon est légèrement différente du texte reçu de l'*Ap*, mais présente un point commun avec l'extrait fourni par le *Contre Eunome* de Basile (les éléments qui diffèrent sont soulignés) : Eunome, *Apologie* 7 (Vaggione 40,11) : « μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτός ἐστιν οὐσία ἀγέννητος » ; Basile, *Contre Eunome* 5 (SC 299, 176,81) : « μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸ ἐστὶν οὐσία ἀγέννητος » ; Eunome, *Apologie de l'Apologie* (GNO I, 216,16–17) : « μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸ ἐστὶν ἀγέννητον ». En comparant ces différentes versions, il apparaît que le αὐτό de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* peut être compris comme le αὐτός du texte reçu de l'*Ap*, lequel se rapporte à θεός : le αὐτό désignerait donc Dieu lui-même.
- 10 Cf. CE I 661 (GNO I, 216,17–20) : « οὐκ εἰς τὸ εἶναι συναιρούντες τὸ δειχθὲν ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν Ἀκολουθεῖ τῇ προσηγορίᾳ, τὸ δὲ Ἐστὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ συναρμόζοντες », le « τὸ δειχθὲν ἀκολουθεῖν » se rapportant au terme ἀγέννητος.
- 11 C'est ce qu'Eunome énonçait dans l'*Apologie*, cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 12 (Vaggione 48,9–10) : « ἐπαληθευούσης τῇ οὐσίᾳ τῆς προσηγορίας ».

substance divine¹². Quoi qu'il en soit, cette approche épistémologique permet à Eunome d'affirmer la dissemblance selon la substance du Père et du Fils, en s'appuyant justement sur l'opposition des termes γεννητός/ἀγέννητος, un point que Grégoire relève très fréquemment dans le *CE I*: Eunome veut remettre en cause la similitude par l'opposition d'« inengendré » avec « engendré »; il dit que l'agennésie et la génération sont substances et donc que l'inengendré est connu par certains signes (σημείοις), mais l'engendré par d'autres; il établit la divergence de la nature (τὸ παρηλλαγμένον τῆς φύσεως) dans la différence entre engendré et inengendré; il affirme que l'inengendré diffère de l'engendré dans la définition de sa nature (ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως); il sépare (διασχίζει) de la nature du Père la substance du Monogène, parce que l'un a été engendré tandis que l'autre est inengendré; surtout, Eunome transpose l'opposition des termes γεννητός/ἀγέννητος sur les personnes auxquelles correspondent ces noms pour spéculer sur l'altérité des substances (τὴν ἑτερότητα τῶν οὐσιῶν) du fait de la divergence des noms¹³. On comprend alors la vigueur avec laquelle l'anoméen rejette pour Dieu toute appellation autre que celle d'ἀγέννητος et souligne, par le biais de trois syllogismes, l'absurdité qu'il y aurait à vouloir remplacer le nom ἀγέννητος par celui de *Père*, comme le proposait Basile¹⁴. Ces trois syllogismes et leur examen par Grégoire prennent une place étonnamment longue dans le *CE I* (*CE I* 549–616) et préparent au lecteur « un exercice de patience », comme Grégoire le remarque lui-même¹⁵. De telles argumentations sophistiques ne sont cependant pas propres à Eunome: Basile et Grégoire présentent eux-aussi, à l'occasion, des raisonnements similaires¹⁶.

12 Cf. spécialement Eunome, *Apologie* 8 (Vaggione 42,14–18), où le raisonnement d'Eunome est fondé sur la simplicité divine; voir sur ce point M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 36–38.

13 Cf. *CE I* 473 (GNO I, 163,18–19); 512 (GNO I, 174,15–21); 516 (GNO I, 175,16–18); 518 (GNO I, 176,11–13); 642 (GNO I, 211,4–6); 646 (GNO I, 212,13–16).

14 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 5 (SC 299, 174,63–176,75). Les trois syllogismes d'Eunome (cf. *CE I* 552; 577; 600) sont les suivants: Si Père a la même signification qu'« inengendré », alors Père signifierait que Dieu n'est issu de rien, non qu'il ait engendré un Fils (syllogisme 1); ensuite, Dieu serait inengendré du fait d'avoir engendré le Fils, d'où le corollaire: avant d'avoir engendré le Fils, Dieu ne serait pas inengendré (syllogisme 2); enfin, il serait alors permis de dire « l'inengendré est l'inengendré du Fils » ou « le Père est l'inengendré du Fils » (syllogisme 3).

15 *CE I* 550 (GNO I, 185,19): « γυμνάσιον μακροθυμίας ».

16 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 10 (SC 305, 40,28–44); *CE III/2* 152 à propos de la déclaration d'Eunome « le Fils admet la génération »: Grégoire rappelle les efforts d'Eunome pour dire que la génération est substance; il en conclut donc que si la substance admet

La réponse de Grégoire ne se limite cependant pas à la simple réfutation des syllogismes d'Eunome. Ainsi souligne-t-il que les simples noms de *Père* et de *Fils* manifestent la parenté de nature, « perçue automatiquement à partir de ces dénominations »¹⁷. Par ailleurs et pour ce qui concerne le mot même ἀγγνητος, Grégoire prend bien soin de noter, en s'appuyant sur Mt 12, 34, la priorité du concept caché du cœur (τὸ κρυπτόν τῆς καρδίας νόημα) sur la parole, laquelle ne fait que manifester les mouvements de l'âme¹⁸. Rien n'empêche donc d'employer un autre terme que celui d'ἀγγνητος pour manifester adéquatement ce que signifie ce mot, par exemple le nom *Père*, comme le proposait Basile¹⁹. D'autre part, le terme ἀγγνητος, si important pour les anoméens, ne saurait être logiquement premier par rapport à γεννητός, puisque le mot « engendré » pose un concept, tandis que celui d'« inengendré » en indique la suppression²⁰. Dans le même ordre d'idée, Grégoire souligne l'impossibilité d'indiquer quelque chose de Dieu par un terme négatif, qui signifie seulement ce qui n'appartient absolument pas à Dieu, comme c'est le cas avec

la génération, il est aussi possible de dire que « la substance admet la substance ou que la génération admet la génération ».

17 Cf. CE I 159 (75,6–7) : « τὸ γὰρ τῆς φύσεως συγγενὲς ἐκ τῶν προσηγοριῶν τούτων αὐτομάτως διερχομένηται. » Le αὐτομάτως de Grégoire peut sembler abusif, puisque la similitude de nature liée aux noms de Père et de Fils (et donc fondée sur la notion de génération) constitue un des points majeurs de la polémique, cf. Athanase, *Adversus Arianos* I 26,4; I 28; Épiphanes, *haer.* 73 3,5 (difficultés d'une telle analogie évoquées par la *Lettre synodale* homéousienne de 358); Épiphanes, *haer.* 73 6,1 (objections anoméennes contre une analogie avec la génération humaine). En CE I 628, Grégoire retiendra uniquement, à partir des noms de Père et de Fils, le fait que le Fils n'est pas sans principe. Une similitude de nature (ὁμοία οὐσία) déduite à partir des noms de Père et de Fils était un argument homéousien, cf. Épiphanes, *haer.* 73 3,3; 73 4,2; 73 22,7; cf. aussi Athanase, *Adversus Arianos* I 26,4. Grégoire pourrait reprendre cet argument ou simplement expliciter ce que disait son frère, cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 17 (SC 299, 232,19–20) : « κοινωνία πρὸς τὸν γεννήσαντα ».

18 Cf. CE I 539 (GNO I, 182,21–22) : « πρὸς δὴ λωσιν τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς κινήματων ».

19 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 5 (SC 299, 174,63–176,71), cité par Grégoire en CE I 536. Il est possible de relever à cette occasion la position de Grégoire sur l'origine du langage, qui selon lui jaillit de l'esprit humain, ce qui est contraire à l'opinion d'Eunome, qui déprécie l'ἐπίνοια humaine et assigne une origine divine au langage, laquelle assure une connaissance de la substance des réalités. Sur la position de Grégoire, cf. aussi CE II 164 (GNO I, 272,26–27) : « ἡμεῖς τε γὰρ φαμεν ἐφευρῆσθαι τοῖς οὖσι τὰ γνωριστικά τῶν ὄντων ὀνόματα διὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐννοίας ».

20 Cf. CE I 650 (GNO I, 213,16–18) : « οὐκοῦν ἢ μὲν γέννησίς τινος πράγματος ἢ νοήματος θέσιν ἀποσημαίνει, ἢ δὲ ἀγεννησία τὴν τοῦ τεθέντος, καθὼς εἶπον, ἀναίρεσιν· ὥστε παντὶ τρόπῳ προεισθῆναι τοῦ τῆς ἀγεννησίας ὀνόματος τὸ τῆς γεννήσεως ὄνομα. »

d'autres concepts négatifs tels *invisible*, *impassible* ou *incorporel*²¹. Enfin, Grégoire s'efforce de souligner, au terme d'une démonstration étonnement longue²², à quelle absurdité conduit l'opposition γεννητός/ἀγέννητος lorsque ces termes sont élevés au rang de substance²³; par son affirmation, Eunome ne fait que réintroduire dans l'Église l'enseignement de Mani, voire une doctrine pire que celle de Mani, comme Grégoire le souligne au terme de son raisonnement :

Qu'est-il ainsi établi ? À la fois la subsistence de ce qui est opposé au bien, et le fait qu'à partir du bien lui-même subsiste son contraire en nature. Cela, dis-je, est encore plus effrayant que l'absurdité des Manichéens²⁴.

Ces multiples raisonnements de Grégoire rythment pour ainsi dire sa réfutation des arguments d'Eunome. Cependant, cette remise en cause des positions de l'anoméen sur le terme ἀγέννητος et la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος se limite-t-elle à ces développements avant tout épistémologiques, qui caractérisent les dernières parties du CE 1 ? Il importe, pour répondre à cette question, d'examiner le fragment 1 de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, ce fragment qui apparaît au premier abord si abstrait, voire abstrus.

Le fragment 1 se distingue par l'absence des termes Père, Fils ou Esprit. Ce fait n'est pas propre à Eunome, puisque son maître Aèce faisait de même²⁵. Cependant, ce fragment semble faire un pas de plus dans l'abstraction du vocabulaire, centré presque uniquement sur trois οὐσίαι : il n'est fait aucune

21 Cf. CE I 645. Basile tenait le même genre de raisonnement, mais en faisant appel à d'autres termes (ἄφθαρτος, ἀθάνατος, ἀόρατος), cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 9 (SC 299, 200, 26–202, 40). Sur ce point, Eunome semblerait donc plus proche des conceptions de la théologie négative néo-platonicienne sur l'application à Dieu de termes négatifs, cf. R. Mortley, *From Word to Silence. The way of negation, Christian and Greek*, t. 2, Bonn 1986, 128s.

22 CE I 504–523.

23 Selon la présentation de Grégoire, CE I 512 (GNO I, 174, 15–16) : « τὴν ἀγεννησίαν οὐσίαν φασὶ καὶ τὴν γέννησιν ὡσαύτως εἰς οὐσίαν ἀνάγουσιν. »

24 CE I 523 (GNO I, 177, 28–178, 2) : « τί διὰ τούτων κατασκευάζεται ; τὸ καὶ ὑφεστάναι τὸ τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἀντικείμενον καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ὑποστῆναι τὸ ὑπεναντίον τῇ φύσει. τοῦτο φημι καὶ τῆς τῶν Μανιχαίων ἀτοπίας εἶναι φρικτότερον. »

25 Aèce parlait plutôt d'engendré (γεννητός) et d'inengendré (ἀγέννητος), cf. *Syntagmation*, proposition 1 (Wickham, 540) : « εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ θεῷ τὸ γεννητὸν ἀγέννητον ποιῆσαι. » Effectivement, les termes de Père et Fils pouvaient, selon lui, laisser supposer une passion en Dieu, cf. *Syntagmation*, proposition 8, 9 et 10 (Wickham, 541) ; cf. aussi le témoignage de la *Lettre synodale* homéousienne de 358 in Épiphanes, *haer.* 73, 3, 2 et celui d'Athanase, *Adversus Arianos* I 34, 4.

allusion à d'autres vocables tels que *ἄθάνατος*, *ἄσαρκος*, *ἄκτιστος* et, surtout, *ἀγέννητος* (et les termes qui y sont liés comme *γεννητός* ou *ἀγεννησία*). Un passage important du *CE I* peut expliquer quelque peu ce langage contourné. En effet, Grégoire en *CE I* 474 rapporte plus ou moins directement des propos de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*²⁶, où il est possible de relever, entre autres, les termes « oreilles inexercées » (*ἀγυμνάστοις ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*) : Eunome se féliciterait de ne pas avoir proposé sa doctrine (Grégoire dit « son impiété ») à des oreilles inexercées avant d'en avoir présenté les fondements (Grégoire dit « avant d'avoir ficelé l'établissement de sa tromperie »)²⁷. Or, ces termes « oreilles inexercées » se trouvaient déjà littéralement dans un passage du *Contre Eunome* de Basile, où l'évêque de Césarée reprochait à Eunome de ne pas avoir annoncé directement dans son *Apologie* sa doctrine de l'agennésie (*ἀγεννησία*), mais d'avoir commencé par une simple profession de foi, de peur, selon Basile, « qu'en jetant à des oreilles inexercées [ses positions théologiques] il en arrive à perdre son crédit et à se rendre insupportable »²⁸. Dès lors, les mots « oreilles inexercées » en *CE I* 474 sont très certainement les mots mêmes de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* d'Eunome, lequel, pour répondre à l'accusation jetée par Basile, aura repris les propres termes de celui-ci : Basile accusait Eunome de ne pas vouloir exposer sa doctrine de l'inengendré à des oreilles inexercées ; cette fois, Eunome a donc pris soin, contrairement à l'*Apologie*, d'apporter tous les fondements doctrinaux nécessaires (c'est le fragment 1) pour introduire sa doctrine de l'inengendré et ne pas choquer des oreilles inexercées. L'absence dans le fragment 1 des termes fondamentaux de la théologie d'Eunome (*ἀγέννητος*, *γεννητός*, *ἀγεννησία*) se comprend alors mieux, puisque l'anoméen désire justement préparer ses lecteurs avant de les introduire²⁹. Il convient alors de se deman-

26 *CE I* 474 (GNO I, 163,22–164,1). Il arrive assez fréquemment à Grégoire de rapporter à sa façon des propos d'Eunome, cf. en particulier *CE I* 206 (GNO I, 86,22–27), 224 (GNO I, 92,2–11) et spécialement 479–480 (GNO I, 165,10–17), où Grégoire dit explicitement reprendre l'affirmation d'Eunome avec ses propres mots, « ταῦτα διὰ τῆς ἑμαυτοῦ λέξεως γράφω » (GNO I, 165,16–17) ; de même *CE II* 499 (GNO I, 372,5–6). Dans le cas présent, les premiers mots de Grégoire laissent clairement entendre qu'il veut rapporter des propos de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, cf. *CE I* 474 (GNO I, 163,22–23) : « Ὅτι δὲ εἰς τοῦτο βλέπουσιν αἱ κατασκευαὶ πάσαι, τὸ ἐπιφερόμενον δείκνυσιν, ἐν οἷς ἑαυτὸν ἀποδέχεται κτλ ».

27 *CE I* 474 (GNO I, 163,26–28) : « οὐδὲ πρὸ τοῦ συναρτῆσαι τὴν κατασκευὴν τῆς ἀπάτης ἀγυμνάστοις ἔτι ταῖς ἀκοαῖς προσβάλλων τὴν ἀσέβειαν ».

28 Basile, *Contre Eunome I* 4 (SC 299, 166,49–50) : « ἵνα μὴ ἀγυμνάστοις ταῖς ἀκοαῖς προσβάλλων ἀπίθανον ἑαυτὸν καὶ δυσπαράδεκτον καταστήσῃ ».

29 Sur cet aspect de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* d'Eunome et de son organisation, cf. X. Batllo, *Ontologie scalaire et Polémique trinitaire*, 75–76 ; 86–88. Ce rôle des premières citations de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* comme réponse à l'attaque formulée par Basile (cf. Basile, *Contre*

der en quoi le fragment 1 *prépare* les lecteurs d'Eunome et la réponse à cette question peut être abordée sous trois angles différents.

Il apparaît d'une part, à travers l'exposé du fragment 1, que la transcendance de la première substance (la plus haute et la plus authentique, ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριωτάτη) repose sur le fait qu'elle ne dépende absolument d'aucune cause, ce qui n'est le cas ni de la seconde substance, qui est « par la première substance », ni de la troisième, qui est « subordonnée à l'une selon la cause, à l'autre selon l'activité par laquelle elle est advenue »³⁰. Même si Eunome n'emploie pas ici le terme, il semble tout à fait possible de traduire cette transcendance par le vocable ἀναρχος³¹, voire par celui d'ἀγέννητος, comme y invitent les affirmations d'Aèce et celles d'Eunome lui-même³². Implicitement, Eunome établit donc en ce début du fragment 1 la notion d'ἀγέννητος comme signe de transcendance et, conséquemment, la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος comme critère de dissemblance.

Par ailleurs, Eunome mentionne incidemment les noms connotés aux substances³³ et, par cette allusion très brève à ses positions épistémologiques,

Eunome 1 4) avait déjà été relevé par R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 102–103, qui ne donne cependant aucune interprétation des termes « ἀγυμνάστους ταῖς ἀκοαῖς ».

30 Pour la seconde substance, cf. CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,2): « δι' ἐκείνην μὲν οὐσης »; pour la troisième substance, cf. CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,5–7): « τῇ μὲν διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν, τῇ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν καθ' ἣν γέγονεν ὑποταττομένης ». Eunome laisse par ailleurs entendre qu'il en est de même pour toutes les autres substances, puisque celles-ci sont subordonnées à la seconde substance qui tient, après la première, la première place sur toutes les autres, cf. CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,3–4): « μετ' ἐκείνην δὲ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων πρωτεύουσας ». Cette transcendance fondée sur l'absence de cause était déjà soulignée par Eunome (à propos du Père) en *Apologie* 7 (Vaggione 40,2–3): « μήτε παρ' ἑαυτοῦ μήτε παρ' ἐτέρου γενόμενος ».

31 Ἄναρχος est un attribut du Dieu tout-puissant pour Eunome, cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 23 (Vaggione 62,6), 26 (Vaggione 68,3), 28 (Vaggione 74,1); *Expositio Fidei* 2 (Vaggione 150,3–4); CE II 471 (GNO I, 364,1–4). Au contraire, le Fils selon Eunome n'est pas ἀναρχος, cf. Eunome, *Expositio Fidei* 3 (Vaggione 152,5).

32 Cf. Aèce, *Syntagmation*, proposition 2 (Wickham, 540–541): « Εἰ πάσης αἰτίας κρείττων ὑπάρχει ὁ ἀγέννητος θεός, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γενέσεως κρείττων ἂν εἴη. εἰ δὲ κρείττων ἐστὶ πάσης αἰτίας, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ γενέσεως. Οὐτε γὰρ παρ' ἐτέρας φύσεως εἴληφε τὸ εἶναι οὔτε αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ τὸ εἶναι παρέσχευ. » Pour Aèce, il apparaît donc que le fait de transcender toute cause, d'être supérieur à toute cause (d'être ἀναρχος), entraîne le fait d'être supérieur à la génération, donc d'être ἀγέννητος. Quant à Eunome, la citation de l'*Apologie* de l'*Apologie* rapportée en CE I 477 est révélatrice, puisque les termes ἀναρχος et ἀγέννητος sont employés de façon presque synonyme.

33 Cf. CE I 151 (GNO I, 72,9–10): « τῶν ταύταις προσφυῶν ὀνομάτων. »

prépare sa défense du terme ἀγέννητος comme concept révélateur de la substance du Père³⁴.

Enfin, le fragment 1 est aussi le lieu où Eunome développe une méthodologie théologique³⁵ destinée à résoudre les problèmes concernant les substances ou les œuvres. Cette méthodologie repose sur les réflexions précédentes d'Eunome³⁶, spécialement sur la corrélation étroite qu'il établit entre une activité et son œuvre : selon Eunome, les différences entre les activités correspondent à celles qu'auront leurs œuvres, si bien qu'une œuvre plus digne ou plus ancienne qu'une autre suppose une activité supérieure³⁷. Cette méthodologie est appliquée dans le fragment 2, qui est consacré à la question de la similitude ou non du Père avec le Fils et où la notion d'agennésie (ἀγεννησία) joue un rôle fondamental³⁸. Sans reprendre dans le détail toute la démonstration d'Eunome, il importe de souligner ici la pointe de son argumentation. Pour l'anoméen, la question de la dissemblance du Fils d'avec le Père dépend non des œuvres de la providence³⁹, mais de la dignité naturelle (ἡ φυσικὴ ἀξία) du Père, c'est-à-dire de l'agennésie (ἀγεννησία)⁴⁰ ; le Père étant inengendré, il ne peut donc être que dissemblable du Fils engendré. La mise de côté des œuvres de la providence apparaît donc comme un nœud majeur de l'argumentation d'Eunome. Contrairement à Grégoire, pour qui l'identité d'action du Père et du Fils permet de fonder l'identité de leur nature (comme c'est justement le cas pour les œuvres de la providence)⁴¹, Eunome estime que celles-ci ne

34 Cf. *supra* notes 7 s.

35 CE I 154 (GNO I, 73,3–15).

36 Les premiers mots le soulignent bien, cf. CE I 154 (GNO I, 73,3) : « οὕτω δὲ τούτων ἐχόντων ».

37 Cf. CE I 152 (GNO I, 72,18–20) : « συνόλως τε εἰπεῖν πρὸς τοσαύτην ἐξικνεῖσθαι διαφοράν, πρὸς ὁπόσῃν ἂν ἐξικνῆται τὰ ἔργα » ; CE I 153 (GNO I, 72,23–26) : « ὅσῳ τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἔργων πρεσβύτερα καὶ τιμιώτερα, τοσούτῳ καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς ἐνεργείας ἀναβεβηκέναι φαίη ἂν τις εὐσεβῶς διανοούμενος. »

38 L'étude de ce fragment 2 est assez délicate, puisque ce fragment se limite à deux citations assez restreintes de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie* : CE I 446 (GNO I, 156,5–8) ; 461 (GNO I, 160,11–13).

39 Eunome dit explicitement vouloir se détourner des œuvres de la providence, cf. CE I 446 (GNO I, 156,5–6) : « ἀποστήναι μὲν λέγει τῶν τῆς προνοίας ἔργων ».

40 Cf. CE I 470 (GNO I, 162,25–26) ; Grégoire recherche au fil des pages précédentes quelle est la dignité naturelle énoncée par Eunome ; après avoir montré que la différence en dignité n'est pas celle selon les différences contingentes ni celle selon les propriétés de la divinité, celle-ci ne peut être que selon la notion d'ἀναρχος, et encore selon une certaine signification qui est celle défendue par Eunome : l'agennésie.

41 C'est ce que fait Grégoire en CE I 441 (GNO I, 154,16–20) : « εἰ δὲ προνοεῖ μὲν ὁ πατήρ τῶν ἀπάντων, προνοεῖ δὲ ὡσαύτως καὶ ὁ υἱός (ἃ γὰρ βλέπει τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα, καὶ ὁ υἱός ὁμοίως ποιεῖ), ἡ

permettent pas de résoudre la question de la similitude du Fils avec le Père. En effet, conformément à la méthodologie du fragment 1 et à la corrélation activité-œuvre qu'il y présentait, Eunome considère ces activités communes au Père et au Fils comme secondes par rapport à la génération, parce qu'elles ne concernent que les créatures et ne visent pas le Fils lui-même, comme le fait la génération; en tant que telles, ces activités s'avèrent donc non dirimantes dans la résolution de la question de la similitude du Fils avec le Père, qui ne peut alors être résolue que par le biais de la génération⁴², ce qui fait entrer en jeu la dignité naturelle du Père, l'ἀγεννησία. Comme il est possible de le remarquer, toute cette démonstration repose sur les réflexions ontologiques du fragment 1, lequel apparaît donc, une fois encore, une préparation des lecteurs à la doctrine de l'ἀγεννησία, de l'ἀγέννητος et de la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος.

Ces multiples remarques permettent dès lors de répondre à l'une des questions posées au début de cette étude: l'opposition γεννητός/ἀγέννητος n'intervient pas uniquement dans les questions épistémologiques finales du CE I, mais trouve au contraire de solides fondements métaphysiques dans les premières affirmations d'Eunome, si fortement condensées dans le fragment 1. On peut alors supposer que la réponse de Grégoire aux affirmations métaphysiques d'Eunome ne va pas être sans rapport avec la problématique γεννητός/ἀγέννητος.

Eunome, dans le fragment 1, présente trois substances subordonnées et introduit ainsi une échelle des êtres dont le critère de supériorité et d'infériorité dépend de l'absence ou non de cause: la première substance, supérieure à toute cause, est la substance la plus haute et la plus authentique, tandis que les deux autres substances lui sont subordonnées⁴³. Comme cela était précédemment souligné, Eunome établit implicitement, en ce début du fragment 1, la notion d'ἀγέννητος comme signe de transcendance et prépare la distinction

τῶν προαιρέσεων ταυτότης τὸ κοινὸν τῆς φύσεως τῶν τὰ αὐτὰ προαιρουμένων πάντως ἐνδείκνυται.» Cf. de même *Eust* (GNO III/1 11,12–15). Sur ce principe souvent avancé par Grégoire (l'identité d'action manifeste l'identité de nature), on pourra se référer aux nombreux exemples réunis par J.-C. Larchet, *La Théologie des Énergies divines. Des origines à saint Jean Damascène*, Paris 2010, 193–195.

42 Effectivement, les différences entre les activités correspondent, selon Eunome, à celles qu'auront leurs œuvres (cf. *supra* note 37); dès lors, la génération est une activité plus grande que la providence, et puisque les doutes sur les substances ne peuvent être résolus qu'à partir des premières activités (cf. CE I 154 (GNO I, 73,9–10): «ἐκ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προσεχῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργειῶν»), c'est donc la génération qui permet de résoudre la question de la similitude du Fils avec le Père.

43 Cf. *supra* note 30.

γεννητός/ἀγέννητος comme critère de dissemblance. En réponse à cette ontologie scalaire, Grégoire expose un contre-système, une autre échelle des êtres, fondée non plus sur la notion générale de cause, mais sur celle de création :

De tous les êtres, la distinction la plus haute est la division entre l'intelligible et le sensible. (...) Mais la raison divise en deux aussi la notion de la nature intelligible. De fait, il est logique de percevoir l'une incréée, l'autre créée : est incréée celle productrice de la création, créée celle qui, par la nature incréée, a sa cause et capacité d'être⁴⁴.

Grégoire remplace ainsi l'opposition d'Eunome γεννητός/ἀγέννητος par la distinction κτιστός/ἄκτιστος et déplace ainsi la césure qu'établissait celui-ci : alors que le terme ἀγέννητος permet à l'anoméen de distinguer κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν le Père du Fils, Grégoire définit au contraire le terme ἄκτιστος comme nouveau critère de transcendance, réaffirme que le Père, le Fils et l'Esprit sont tous de nature incréée⁴⁵ et brise ainsi la dissemblance κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν que voulait introduire Eunome entre les personnes divines. Ceci ressort tout particulièrement en *CE* I 467–469, paragraphes où Grégoire examine la dignité naturelle (ἡ φυσικὴ ἀξία) du Père présentée par Eunome. Cette dignité est l'ἀγεννησία selon Eunome, mais Grégoire emploie plutôt dans ces paragraphes le terme ἀναρχος et remet en cause l'attribution par Eunome au Père seul de cette dignité. Grégoire considère en effet le terme ἀρχή comme polysémique (πολύσημος) et distingue deux sens : selon un premier sens, ἀναρχος peut signifier « ne pas avoir son hypostase à partir d'une cause quelconque », et Grégoire est alors d'accord pour réserver ce terme au seul Père inengendré⁴⁶. Selon un second sens, cependant, ἀναρχος peut être lié à une autre notion de principe ou de causalité :

44 *CE* I 270–271 (GNO I, 105,19–106,6) : « Πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἡ ἀνωτάτω διαίρεσις εἰς τε τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν τὴν τομὴν ἔχει. (...) ὁ δὲ λόγος εἰς δύο τέμνει καὶ ταύτης [la nature intelligible] τὴν ἔννοιαν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἄκτιστος ἡ δὲ κτιστὴ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀκολουθίας καταλαμβάνεται, ἄκτιστος μὲν ἡ ποιητικὴ τῆς κτίσεως, κτιστὴ δὲ ἡ διὰ τῆς ἀκτίστου φύσεως τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ εἶναι ἔχουσα. » Grégoire reprend cette échelle des êtres en *CE* I 361, mais cette fois sans évoquer la distinction sensible/intelligible et en étendant plus explicitement la distinction κτιστός/ἄκτιστος à l'ensemble des êtres.

45 Grégoire le laisse entendre simplement au début de la présentation de son échelle des êtres, cf. *CE* I 270s, mais il apporte un peu plus loin une longue justification scripturaire, cf. *CE* I 296–315 (*CE* I 296–303 sur la nature incréée du Fils, *CE* I 303–315 sur la nature incréée de l'Esprit).

46 Cf. *CE* I 468 (GNO I, 162,10–13) : « τὸ μὴ ἐξ αἰτίου τινὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχειν ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἀνάρχου νοῆται, τοῦτο μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς ἴδιον ὁμολογοῦμεν τοῦ ἀγεννητῶς ὄντος ».

Mais lorsque l'examen porte sur les autres sens de «principe», puisque l'on conçoit un principe de création, de temps et d'ordre, pour tous ces cas nous attestons aussi pour le Monogène le fait d'être supérieur à un principe, afin de croire qu'est au-delà de tout, que ce soit un principe de création, un concept de temps ou un enchaînement ordonné, celui par qui tout est advenu⁴⁷.

Une telle distinction n'est pas faite par Basile⁴⁸ et Grégoire pourrait peut-être reprendre à Athanase le principe de son raisonnement. Athanase distingue effectivement deux sens de ἀγέννητος (avec un seul ν), l'un qui signifie non pas être créature, mais ne pas être advenu du fait d'être toujours (τὸ μὴ ποίημα, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ὃν ἀγέννητον εἶναι) et qui peut être dit du Fils; l'autre qui signifie exister, mais sans avoir été engendré de personne ni avoir de père (τὸ ὑπάρχον μὲν, μήτε δὲ γεννηθὲν ἔκ τινος μήτε ἔχον ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα) et qui ne peut être dit que du Père⁴⁹. De même, Athanase présente dans son traité *De Synodis* deux sens possibles selon lesquels était compris le terme ἀγέννητον (avec deux ν) par les auteurs ecclésiastiques⁵⁰ : le premier sens (ἀγέννητον signifie ne pas être engendré ni avoir une cause quelconque) était réservé au Père (Athanase ne mentionne alors que des διδάσκαλοι postérieurs à Ignace, sans les nommer), tandis que le second sens (ἀγέννητον signifie ἄκτιστον) pouvait être dit du Fils (Athanase mentionne alors Ignace d'Antioche)⁵¹. Sans qu'il soit possible d'affirmer une dépendance ou non de Grégoire vis-à-vis d'Athanase, la distinction introduite par le Cappadocien entraîne deux conséquences importantes.

La première concerne la causalité au sein de la nature incréée, qui apparaît distincte de tout ce qui est lié à la notion de création, de temps et d'enchaînement ordonné, causalité selon laquelle seul le Père est ἀναρχος. Le Fils (ainsi que l'Esprit⁵²) a le Père comme cause de son hypostase, mais sans être subordonné

47 CE I 468 (GNO I, 162,13–19) : « ὅταν δὲ κατὰ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς σημειομένων ἡ ἐξέτασις ᾗ, ἐπειδὴ καὶ κτίσεώς τις ἐπινοεῖται ἀρχὴ καὶ χρόνου καὶ τάξεως, κἂν τούτοις καὶ τῷ μονογενεῖ προσμαρτυροῦμεν τὸ ὑψηλότερον ἀρχῆς εἶναι, ὡς ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν καὶ κτίσεως ἀρχὴν καὶ χρόνον ἔννοιαν καὶ τάξεως ἀκολουθίαν εἶναι πιστεύειν τὸν δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο ».

48 Basile recommande de ne jamais considérer le Fils sans principe, cf. Basile, *Sur le Saint Esprit* 19 (SC 17bis, 314,34s).

49 Cf. Athanase, *Adversus Arianos* I 31,1–3.

50 Cf. Athanase, *De Synodis* 46,2–3 (Athanasius Werke 11/1 271,18–19) : « καὶ οἱ μὲν τὸ ὃν μὲν, μήτε δὲ γεννηθὲν μήτε ὅλως ἔχον τὸν αἴτιον λέγουσιν ἀγέννητον, οἱ δὲ τὸ ἄκτιστον. »

51 Cf. Athanase, *De Synodis* 47,1.

52 Grégoire ne mentionne pas l'Esprit dans son raisonnement, mais ses conclusions peuvent lui être très certainement étendues.

à celui-ci, puisque Père et Fils sont tous les deux de nature créée. Contrairement à Eunome donc, pour qui toute causalité était subordonnante, Grégoire définit la génération du Fils par le Père comme *non subordonnante*⁵³.

La seconde conséquence touche l'opposition γεννητός/ἀγγέννητος, qui était pour Eunome un critère de dissemblance κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν; pour Grégoire, elle n'a plus ce sens, mais reste fondamentale pour distinguer clairement et nettement les hypostases du Père et du Fils⁵⁴. Conformément au principe κοινόν/ἴδιον, que Grégoire reprend à son frère Basile⁵⁵, les propriétés γεννητός et ἀγγέννητος sont présentées comme des éléments propres qui caractérisent respectivement le Fils et le Père; ces éléments propres sont distincts du caractère ἄκτιστος qui leur est commun. Ce point apparaît de façon très nette en CE I 278–279, alors que Grégoire précise justement les caractéristiques propres à chacun des membres de la Triade; ainsi pour le Père et le Fils:

On confesse par exemple que le Père est incréé et inengendré: il n'a été en effet ni engendré ni créé; le fait d'être incréé lui est commun au Fils et à l'Esprit Saint. Mais il est aussi inengendré et Père: ceci, qui n'est saisi dans aucun des deux autres, lui est propre et incommunicable. Le Fils, lui, qui est conjoint au Père et à l'Esprit selon l'incréé, possède son caractère propre dans le fait d'être nommé et d'exister comme Fils et Monogène, ce qui n'est le cas ni du Dieu de l'univers ni de l'Esprit Saint⁵⁶.

53 Peut-être est-il possible, à simple titre d'hypothèse, de voir dans cette polémique un reflet des différentes approches philosophiques de la génération faites, d'un côté, par Aristote (cf. la célèbre formule *l'homme engendre un homme*) et, d'un autre côté, par Porphyre (suivant Plotin, *Enn.* v 1,6), qui soulignait au contraire l'infériorité issue de la génération, cf. Porphyre, *Sent.* 13 (Brisson): « Πάν τὸ γεννῶν τῇ οὐσίᾳ αὐτοῦ χεῖρον ἑαυτοῦ γεννᾷ. » et le commentaire de W. Kühn in Porphyre, *Sentences*, L. Brisson (dir.), t. 2, Paris 2005, 412–417. La polémique entre Eunome et Grégoire pourrait alors refléter, en contexte chrétien, ces approches philosophiques différentes, Grégoire soulignant comme Aristote la similitude de substance par la génération, tandis qu'Eunome, comme Porphyre, mettrait plutôt en avant la subordination.

54 Grégoire souligne en effet pour le Père, le Fils et l'Esprit que leur propriété (ἰδίωμα) ou caractéristique (ιδιότης) permet de distinguer leur hypostase respective, cf. CE I 278 (GNO I, 107,23–24): « Ἡ γὰρ ἐπιθεωρουμένη ἐκάστη τῶν ὑποστάσεων ιδιότης τρανῶς καὶ καθαρώς τὸ ἕτερον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου δīσσησιν. »

55 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 28 (SC 305, 118,27–120,42); Id., *Ep.* 236.

56 CE I 278–279 (GNO I, 107,25–108,6): « οἷον ὁ πατήρ ἄκτιστος εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται καὶ ἀγγέννητος· οὔτε γὰρ γεγέννηται οὔτε ἔκτισται· τοῦτο οὖν τὸ ἄκτιστον κοινόν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν υἱόν ἐστι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀγγέννητος καὶ πατήρ· τοῦτο ἰδίον τε καὶ ἀκοινῶνητον, ὅπερ ἐν οὐδενὶ τῶν ὑπολοίπων καταλαμβάνεται. Ὁ δὲ υἱὸς κατὰ τὸ ἄκτιστον τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι συνα-

L'opposition γεννητός/ἀγέννητος, si âprement défendue par Eunome, n'est donc pas supprimée par Grégoire mais réinterprétée dans une perspective de personne et intégrée dans la nouvelle distinction κτιστός/ἄκτιστος.

Le CE I peut surprendre le lecteur de l'*Apologie* d'Eunome, disions-nous au début de ces réflexions, parce que la notion théologique d'ἀγέννητος et la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος semblent y jouer, au premier abord, un rôle beaucoup plus discret que dans l'*Apologie* ou même le *Contre Eunome* de Basile, pour n'intervenir véritablement qu'à la fin de l'ouvrage de Grégoire. Cette différence d'accentuation ne signifie cependant pas un moindre intérêt pour ces thèmes, bien au contraire, car à côté des argumentations principalement épistémologiques qui caractérisent les dernières parties du CE I, les débats plus métaphysiques qui précèdent tournent en fait autour de sujets similaires. Eunome, dans le fragment 1 de l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*, cherche à apporter des fondements métaphysiques à ses affirmations et veut préparer ainsi sa doctrine de l'ἀγέννητος et de la distinction γεννητός/ἀγέννητος. Dès lors, une grande partie de la réfutation de Grégoire se révèle, à son tour, très étroitement liée à ces thèmes; l'échelle des êtres présentée par le Cappadocien et centrée sur la distinction κτιστός/ἄκτιστος vise à supplanter celle d'Eunome articulée sur l'opposition γεννητός/ἀγέννητος, et le critère de transcendance, fondé chez Eunome sur l'absence de cause, est remplacé par Grégoire par un nouveau critère de transcendance, qui est l'absence de cause créatrice. Les liens de causalités entre le Père, le Fils et l'Esprit sont alors réinterprétés comme propriétés caractéristiques des personnes dans l'unité de la nature créée. Si Grégoire s'appuie certainement sur les réflexions d'Athanase et de Basile, il sait cependant les exploiter de façon féconde et bâtir un système métaphysique particulièrement cohérent, dont le CE I se révèle un très précieux témoin.

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πτόμενος ἐν τῷ υἱὸς καὶ μονογενὴς εἶναι τε καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι τὸ ἰδιάζον ἔχει, ὅπερ οὔτε τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων θεοῦ οὔτε τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἐστὶ. ».

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The σχέσις of the Father and of the Son in the *Contra Eunomium I*

Ilaria Vigorelli

Introduction

The analysis of the meaning expressed by the fact that the names of the Father and the Son refer to σχέσις in the *Contra Eunomium I* is an undertaking that has its own significance—it entails penetrating to the heart of Eunomius's misunderstanding of the initial formulation advanced by Basil, so as to be able to emphasize the potential of this formulation, as considered by Gregory of Nyssa, which resounds in his Trinitarian theology and his conception of the world and history.¹ For in Basil, the revealed names “understood in and of themselves (καθ’ἑαυτὰ) only indicate reciprocal relation (πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν).”²

In Eunomius' doctrinal formulation in the *Apologia Apologiae*, reproduced in the *Contra Eunomium I*, the σχέσις of the revealed names is indeed interpreted on the basis of a theory of names which—placing name-operation-substance in direct correspondance—does not allow him to include relation *qua talis* within the meaning of the relative names “Father” and “Son”; but rather, it restricts him to remain closed to the difference of substances.³ Gregory of Nyssa's correction of this interpretation, which is consistent with Basil's treatment of the matter, is of particular interest—and not just for Trinitarian theology, but for the development of ontology that derives from it. Gregory, expounding on Basil's initial intuition and refuting Eunomius' replies, gives

¹ Cf. G. Maspero, *Essere e relazione*, Roma 2013.

² Indeed, it is clear to anyone who examines these names, that is, I mean ‘Father’ and ‘Son’, that they do not in their proper and primary sense naturally give rise to the notion of corporeal passions. On the contrary, when they are said by themselves they indicate only their relation to one another. (Καίτοιγε φανερόν σκοπούμεν ὅτι οὐ σωματικῶν παθῶν κυρίως καὶ πρῶτως ἔννοιαν ἐμποιοῦν ταυτὶ πέφυκε τὰ ὀνόματα, ὁ ‘πατήρ’, λέγω, καὶ ὁ ‘υἱός’, ἀλλὰ καθ’ ἑαυτὰ μὲν λεγόμενα, τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ἐνδείκνυται μόνην. *Adversus Eunomium* II 22,45–48 [SC 305, 92]). For the English translation see M. DelCogliano and A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil. Against Eunomius*, Washington D.C. 2011, 164.

³ For a study of the occurrences in the *Apologia Apologiae* and the theory of names, see I. Vigorelli, *Σχέσις nel Contra Eunomium di Gregorio di Nissa: dalla semantica filosofica alla teologia trinitaria*, License Thesis, Università Pontificia della Santa Croce, Roma 2012, 28–45.

us an overview of the consequences of the notions developed by theological thought on philosophy; notions which fully take shape by the end of the fourth century. Through a study of the use of *σχέσις* in Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* taken from Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* 1, this paper proposes that it is worth developing: 1) the difference between ontology and the attribution of names found in Basil's understanding of the *σχέσις* of the Father and the Son; 2) the ontological effects of the *σχέσις* of the Father and the Son in the Trinitarian theology of Gregory of Nyssa.

I Eunomius and Basil

In the fourth century, Homoousian, Homoiousian and Homoian theologians were all focusing their attention on revealed names,⁴ but with Eunomius and Basil the debate surrounding the value of *ὁμοιος κατ'οὐσίαν*—which stands in opposition to *ἀν-ὁμοιος*—refocused itself on the meaning of the divine names. The names of the Father and the Son are thereby considered in the extent to which they are *references to something*, and from here, in the importance of the use of *σχέσις* and of the interpretative differences between Basil, Eunomius and Gregory in what meaning *σχέσις* assumes with respect to *what* is indicated by the revealed names.⁵

In his *Apologia*, the work which set this contest in motion, Eunomius does not take up the term *σχέσις*. The index of terminology given by Vaggione does not mark any occurrence of *σχέσις* in the text of the *Apologia*, whereas it reports that it appears eight times in the *Apologia Apologiae*.⁶ Gregory of Nyssa uses it twenty-nine times in his *Contra Eunomium* 1, in which citations of Eunomius' formulation are found as well. It is clear that the significance of these occurrences of *σχέσις* is, on the whole, centered on an analysis of the relationship between the revealed names and the divine essence.⁷

Between the first and second of Eunomius' apologetic works appears Basil's contribution, in which with his *Adversus Eunomium* he too makes recourse to

4 See L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, Oxford 2004, 138.

5 For the most part it is that of disposition/relation. Cf. D.G. Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001), 277–287. See also M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, Leiden 2010, 153–259.

6 R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 207.

7 In the *Contra Eunomium* 1, beyond those occurrences related to *θεολογία*, it appears in two other places. One of these has theological significance (*Eun* 1 28,7 [GNO I, 31,9]), and the other has to do with the soul (*Eun* 1 541,4–542,1 [GNO I, 183,10–11]).

the term *σχέσις* eight times. We can reasonably theorize, then, that the insertion of the term within the confines of the Trinitarian debate is due to Basil's response to Eunomius' *Apologia*.⁸

By way of his appeal to the *σχέσις* of the Father and the Son, Basil challenges Eunomius on three fundamental points of his argument about the knowability of the essence of the Father and the Son and their likeness to one another: 1) the connection of the notions known by the Father-Son relationship rather than by the ungenerated-generated relationship; 2) the divine essence with respect to its action; 3) how one must convey or what one must mean in using the revealed names.

1) If for Eunomius the notion of ungenerated is equivalent to the divine name revealed in Sacred Scripture—the name *Father*—Basil maintains that one needs consider that the “term Father” implies the “notion of the Son” as “by means of relation” (διὰ τῆς σχέσεως):

For my part, I would say that we would be justified in passing over the designation ‘unbegotten’ in silence, even if it seems to harmonize particularly well with our notions (ταῖς ἐννοίαις ἡμῶν), on the grounds that it is nowhere to be found in Scripture and furthermore is the primary building block of their blasphemy. The term ‘Father’ means the same as ‘unbegotten’, yet it has the additional advantage of implying a relation (διὰ τῆς σχέσεως συνεισάγειν), thereby introducing the notion of the Son.⁹

This argument is not a new one¹⁰ and Basil remains on the very same level of discourse, as Eunomius sets forth in the *Apologia*—here, it is about notions (ἐννοίαις) and their implications, as meant by the words, regarding the reality presented in Scripture.¹¹ Eunomius refers to Scripture, saying that what he means by the likeness between the Son and the Father is the single likeness of

8 To delve into the relationship between Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* and the prior texts of the controversy, see M. Cassin, *L'Écriture de la controverse chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 2012, 24–32.

9 Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἀγεννήτου προσηγορίαν, καὶ τὰ μάλιστα δοκῇ ταῖς ἐννοίαις ἡμῶν συμβαίνειν, ἀλλ' οὖν ὥς οὐδαμοῦ τῆς Γραφῆς κειμένην, καὶ πρῶτον στοιχεῖον οὖσαν τῆς βλασφημίας αὐτῶν, σιωπᾶσθαι ἂν δικαίως ἀξίαν εἶναι φῆσαιμι, τῆς Πατρὸς φωνῆς ἴσον δυναμένης τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ, πρὸς τῷ καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐννοίαν συνημμένως ἑαυτῇ διὰ τῆς σχέσεως συνεισάγειν. *Adversus Eunomium* I 5,63–69 (SC 299, 174–176; DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz, 93–94).

10 Cf. G. Maspero, *Essere e relazione*, 311–314.

11 Cf. *Apologia* 7–8 (Vaggione, 40–42).

the Only Begotten, “according to His very words” and rejecting the “likeness of essence” (τὴν κατ’οὐσίαν ὁμοιότητα).¹²

The σχέσις between the Father and Son is introduced by Basil on the basis of the invariable bond of the notions, in contrast with the anomee definitions on the knowability of the divine essence. Subsequently, such a bond acquires an additional significance with respect to the comprehension of God’s action (ἐνέργεια). If σχέσις appears in the field of the bond of notions, it is indeed necessary to observe how it is that the relationship between notions, names, and reality came to separate Basil from Eunomius. Following the places where σχέσις occurs, one realizes, in fact, that it appears before and after Chapters twelve through fourteen of the first book of the *Adversus Eunomium*, which make up the section of the work in which Basil judges the ontological value of attributing names in a much different way than Eunomius.¹³ Indeed, the importance of the reference to “relation” shifts the theologian’s attention from the noetic relation that binds names and substances,¹⁴ to the profession of an ordering in God that honors revealed names according to a new ontology. This sense of σχέσις in God will be taken up again and underlined by Gregory.

2) The σχέσις is used here to say “relationship” between God and the economy of the created order:

Furthermore, there is an order which is natural and another that comes about by deliberation. On the one hand, order is natural when it is a question of the order which is arranged for created beings according to the rationales of their creation, the position of countables, and the relation of causes to their effects (ἢ τῶν αἰτίων πρὸς τὰ αἰτιατὰ σχέσις). (Now it has already been agreed upon that God is Maker and Creator of nature itself.)¹⁵

¹² Cf. *Apologia* 22,4–5 (Vaggione, 62).

¹³ The doctrine of proper names and the argumentation of apophatism by Basil—in contrast to the “logos-centrism” of Eunomius—depends on chapters 12–14 of book I of the *Adversus Eunomium*. Being well-aware of the risk of merging ancient and modern conceptual categories, Anatolios suggests that the Trinitarian theology of Gregory of Nyssa was given cause by a reaction to the “Eunomius’ ‘logos-centric’ reductions”. Basil, then, purposefully opened the way to an elaboration of apophatism of his brother Gregory. Cf. K. Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2011, 158–159.

¹⁴ On the *natural connection* between names and respective things in Eunomius’ theory of names, and in contrast to that of Basil, see M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea’s Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 44 and 146–147.

¹⁵ Ἀλλὰ καὶ τάξις ἡ μὲν φυσικὴ τίς ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ κατ’ ἐπιτήδευσιν. Φυσικὴ μὲν ὡς ἡ τῶν κτισμάτων

This occurrence here illuminates a very important passage in Basil's work because of the distinction between the metaphysics of creation and divine ontology. The delicate transition is in the distinction between σχέσις and λόγος. Here, they are equated to each other: the λόγος of the Creator rules the τάξις φυσική and manifests itself also as ἡ τῶν αἰτίων πρὸς τὰ αἰτιατὰ σχέσις. In a later passage, however, a difference in the conception of σχέσις is introduced. Considering the divine essence, the order that must be attributed to God cannot be the same as that in creation. There is a σχέσις in the order of created nature, and this is not differentiated from the λόγος of causes and effects. But in God there is an ordering, a priority—the Father before the Son. Basil rejects the theory which states that there is an ordering given through natural differences—as Eunomius holds to be true, introducing a sequence in God that is proper to ordering in time and differentiating the Father and the Son according to οὐσία—and admits, rather, that the priority of the Father with respect to the Son is according to the ordering of the relation “between the causes and as much as they are *in* and *of* themselves” (κατὰ μὲν τὴν τῶν αἰτίων πρὸς τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν σχέσιν). Basil thereby introduces in God the concept of σχέσις, denying that in God relation occurs due to the difference of nature (κατὰ δὲ τὴν τῆς φύσεως διαφορὰν οὐκέτι).¹⁶ With this, the Bishop of Caesarea reveals what he has gleaned as the difference between immanent divine ontology and the ontology of created nature, which in the second book of the *Adversus Eunomium* he defines as the difference between “theology” and “economy”.¹⁷ This acquisition immediately reflects the way of conceiving the order of relation.

The σχέσις thus allows us to think of the ordering of causality in God, the Father as source of the Son, without supposing diversity of substance and safeguarding natural union (τὴν φυσικὴν συνάφειαν) beyond the immutability of essence. In what we know from Basil, such a connection does not mean a nec-

κατὰ τοὺς δημιουργικοὺς λόγους διαταχθεῖσα, καὶ ὡς ἡ τῶν ἀριθμητῶν θέσις καὶ ὡς ἡ τῶν αἰτίων πρὸς τὰ αἰτιατὰ σχέσις, ἐκείνου προδιωμολογημένου τοῦ καὶ τῆς φύσεως αὐτῆς ποιητὴν εἶναι καὶ δημιουργὸν τὸν Θεόν. Ἐπιτετηθευμένη δὲ καὶ τεχνικὴ ὡς ἡ ἐν τοῖς κατασκευάσμασι καὶ μαθήμασι, καὶ ἀξιώμασι, καὶ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις. *Adversus Eunomium* I 20,12–19 (SC 299, 244; DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz, 120–121).

16 But we say that the Father is ranked prior to the Son in terms of the relation that causes have with what comes from them (κατὰ μὲν τὴν τῶν αἰτίων πρὸς τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν σχέσιν), not in terms of a difference of nature or a pre-eminence based on time. Otherwise we would deny even the very fact that God is the Father since difference in substance (τῆς κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἁλλοτριότητος) precludes their natural connection (τὴν φυσικὴν συνάφειαν). *Adversus Eunomium* I 20,36–41 (SC 299, 246; DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz, 121).

17 *Adversus Eunomium* II 3,11–12 (SC 305, 16).

essary relationship that binds names and substances. Indeed, Basil affirms that one does not attribute difference in God (διαφορᾶν) as in nature, nor as in time, since if one affirms the difference of substance between the Father and the Son, one loses the revealed truth that God Himself *is* Father. Introducing the σχέσις at this level of the discourse, Basil is thereby referring to an ontology that is not yet fully outlined but towards which a step is already decidedly taken. It is indeed possible to claim that through the ordering of causes one catches a glimpse of the clear distinction between the “relations” in play. There are three types: the relation between reality and names (σχέσις in the ordering of gnoseological causality and attribution of names), the Father-Son relation (σχέσις in *immanent* ontological ordering) and the God-world relation (σχέσις in the ontological, *economical* ordering).

3) Other occurrences emerge in Basil’s text, in which σχέσις appears as a reference to Eunomius’ theory of names, and one comes face to face with the difficult question of relative names.¹⁸ Basil claims the priority and excellence of reality with respect to the names by which they are expressed.¹⁹ One can therefore distinguish names which indicate substance (absolute names) from those which only indicate the relation (τὴν σχέσιν μόνην) that the substrata have between one another (πρὸς ἄ). In this way, Basil manages to distinguish—in the name—between the object signified and the way it is conveyed.²⁰

Who does not know that some names are expressed absolutely and in respect of themselves, signifying the things which are their referents, but other names are said relative to others (πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα), expressing only the relation (τὴν σχέσιν) to the other names relative to which they are said?²¹

18 Cf. Eunomius in the *Apologia*, Chapters 8, 12 and 18.

19 *Adversus Eunomium* I 12–14 (SC 299, 212–224).

20 Beyond the complexity of the historiographical studies placed front and center in Basil’s thought with respect to what is relative, the distinction of form and content can be attributed to an Aristotelian paradigm. See B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, SC 299, Paris 1982, 84.

21 Ἐπεὶ τίς οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἀπολελυμένως καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὰ προφερόμενα, τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστὶ σημαντικά· τὰ δὲ, πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα, τὴν σχέσιν μόνην ἐμφαίνει τὴν πρὸς ἃ λέγεται; *Adversus Eunomium* II 9,11–14 (SC 305, 36; DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz, 142). It would seem that on this point the Aristotelian influence of category of relation would explain Basil, as he repeatedly seems to reference the four major Stoic categories. Cf. B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, SC 299, Paris 1982, 78–81.

A characteristic of relative names is that they may be conveyed in three senses: 1) in an *ontological* sense—a relative name implies the existence of “another” that has a correlative name (if a father exists, there exists also a son); 2) in a *noetic-cognitive* sense: a relative name implies the notion of the correlative name (“father” implies the notion of “son”); 3) in a *relational ontological* sense: a relative name implies relation (if there is a father, there is paternity and filiation).²² It would seem that Basil, turning to Aristotle’s treatment of the categories, returns relative names to a single notion, but the relative names that he brings up—such as son, slave, or friend—are each a reference to the existence of some other substance, and are relative with respect to the names. Basil thereby shifts attention to the relational ontological sense. This move is what sustains Basil’s reasoning: while in the initial points of the second book of the *Adversus Eunomium*, using the Stoic categories, and appealing to the authority of Origen, he distinguishes the sense of Christ’s attributions (ἐπίνοιαι) on the basis of Apostolic thought,²³ and on the foundation of the different reference, he is able to clearly distinguish theology and economy,²⁴ when instead he develops the reach of the divine names of the Father and of the Son and of the σχέσις they indicate, he brings attention to the *relational referent* to which the relative name is relative. Moreover, whereas he dealt with notion or substance before, he now looks precisely to relation, which he also expresses with the formulation “φυσικὴ συνάφεια”.

With the formula “καθ’ ἑαυτὰ μὲν λεγόμενα” Basil is able to carve out the semantic field of the names “Father” and “Son,” and there is one single reciprocal relation “τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ἐνδείκνυται μόνην.” He seems, therefore, to treat them as names that are proper to relation.

In Basil, the theological inquiry surrounding the ontological status of the “Son” is thus already configured through the development of the relationality *in* God. On the way towards οὐσία Basil affirms the likeness according to essence by way of a σχέσις that preserves “natural connection” and, in no way undermining the principle of immutability of the divine essence, considers the Father-Son terminological pair according to the relationality implicit in

22 The opinion that traces the clearest definition of the various senses of relative names—often utilized by theologians towards grammarians, and the grammarians towards Stoics—is now settled. Cf. M. DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea’s Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 235 note 187 and the bibliography cited here.

23 “ἡ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου διάνοια.” *Adversus Eunomium* 11 3,3 (SC 305, 16). On the necessity of interpreting the meanings of names attributed to or spoken in regard to Christ, in light of Scripture and the teaching of the Apostles, see Hilary of Poitiers (*De Synodis*, 85).

24 Cf. *Adversus Eunomium* 11 3–4 (SC 305, 16–22).

paternity-filiation. “Only Begotten” and “generated” appear as *properties*, which in God characterize the particularity of the *relation immanent to substance* and so they do not multiply the substance.

Instead, in the context of ἐνεργεαί the difference that Basil introduces through σχέσις is seen in the distinction of the ways in which the causality of God *in relation* is conveyed: 1) God is cause inasmuch as He is *Creator* with respect to all of reality (ἐνεργεαί); 2) but as *Father* only in regards to the Son.

The distinction of the causal relationship according to immanent relation (Paternity and Filiation) from the causality according to which He is Creator, safeguards the immutability of the divine essence and introduces the analogical value of relation between how God is in the divine essence and how God is in relation to created beings. This has direct repercussions on the cognizant value that can be attributed to the language that is used to express God and on the way of seeing that He is the Λόγος of all that which exists.

What Basil gleans in the theological sense—retrieved by the insertion of σχέσις in the debate over the divine οὐσία can therefore be included in the distinction of relation *in* God and relation *external to* God. The distinction is made possible through the philosophical development of the relationship between the ontological and gnoseological planes, and between the gnoseological plane and that of nomination.²⁵

II Gregory and the σχέσις in God

A *The σχέσις in the Apologia Apologiae*

The first book of the *Contra Eunomium* is dedicated to an exacting refutation of the first book of the *Apologia Apologiae*, which corresponds to the Eunomius' own objections to the *Adversus Eunomium 1*, in 1–5 where Basil undercuts the theses of the heretic Eunomius advanced in the first seven chapters of the *Apologia*. The main issue of this book is an outline of Eunomius' initial position—that is, that God is ungenerated and that by this term the divine essence is expressed, and the substance of God is thereby expressed.

25 Sesboüé's claim is related to this: “Come ci si rende conto, tutta questa riflessione parte da una concezione *a posteriori* della conoscenza. Allorché Eunomio si appoggiava su una via discendente, rivelante insieme l'essere e il nome dell'ingenerato, Basilio segue un procedimento ascendente, che si articola sul gioco degli attributi positivi e negativi di Dio.” B. Sesboüé, J. Wolinski, *Storia dei Dogmi, 1: Dio della salvezza*, Casale Monferrato 1996, 261. See also D.G. Robertson, “Relatives in Basil of Caesarea”, 287.

Faithfully reproduced, as are all the other steps of the *Apologia Apologiae*,²⁶ Eunomius' most important pericope, in which the term *σχέσις* appears, is a reference to the bond (τὸν εἰρμόν), which is "fixed" (and thus invariable) (ἀπαράβατον) inasmuch as it is according "to the reciprocal relation" (τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσει) between the realities that are in relation to one another. The reference to *σχέσις* first appears in Gregory's text using the meaning developed by Eunomius, who is cited by Gregory according to a style of writing that mirrors direct dialogue. In this cited claim, Eunomius writes:

Since these are such and in their relation to each other (τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσει) preserve the bond invariable, it is surely right that those who conduct their investigation in accordance with the order inherent in the realities (κατὰ τὴν συμφυῇ τοῖς πράγμασι τάξιν) and do not insist on mixing and confusing everything together, if any dispute should arise about the beings (περὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις), should base their belief about what is being demonstrated and the resolution of disputed points on the primary activities (ἐνεργειῶν) peculiar to the beings, and to resolve any doubt about the activities with reference to the beings, and to reckon it surely more fitting and more effective in all respects to descend from primary to secondary things.²⁷

The formula "that there is preserved the bond invariable in their relation to each other" (τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσει τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβατον), which according to Eunomius would be thus maintained in his reasoning on substance as well (περὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις), immediately renders one concrete indication: for Eunomius, the term *σχέσις* is not to be considered in a way that is disjointed or dislocated from nature (τὴν συμφυῇ τάξιν), but rather it is to be understood as is its gnoseological equivalent. The verbs used by Eunomius to describe the divine

26 Regarding the faithfulness in Gregory's presentation, see C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa. Teologia trinitaria: Contro Eunomio; Confutazione della professione di fede di Eunomio*, Milano 1994, xxviii.

27 οὕτω δὲ τούτων ἐχόντων καὶ τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσει τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβατον διατηρούντων, προσήκει δήπου τοὺς κατὰ τὴν συμφυῇ τοῖς πράγμασι τάξιν τὴν ἐξέτασιν ποιουμένους καὶ μὴ φύρειν ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ συγχεῖν βιαζομένους, εἰ μὲν περὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις κινεῖτό τις ἀμφισβήτησις, ἐκ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προσεχῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργειῶν ποιεῖσθαι τῶν δεικνυμένων τὴν πίστιν καὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων τὴν διάλυσιν, τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐνεργείαις ἀμφιβολίαν διαλύειν ἐκ τῶν οὐσιῶν, ἀρμοδιωτέραν γε μὴν καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνυσιμωτέραν ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τὰ δεύτερα κάθοδον. *Eun* I 154,1–13 (GNO I, 73,3–15). The English translation of the *Contra Eunomium* I cited here belongs to Hall, published in this volume.

substance indeed make reference to the ordering of fixed relations, bearing and reflections of necessity.

The reciprocal relationship is the measure by which one conveys what the cause (αἰτία) is and what the activity (ἐνέργεια) is. That which determines the modes of subordination among substances is cause and energy, activity or operation. Subsequently, and in a corresponding manner, this also determines the modes of the relationships between names. This is the pivotal point in the controversy of the names of the divine substance, and it is on this point that Gregory challenges Eunomius, who in the *Apologia Apologiae* still maintains:

The whole statement of our doctrines comprises the highest and most authentic being. The one which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over all the rest, and a third which is in no way aligned (συνταττομένης) with them, but subject (ὑποταττομένης) to the one because of causation (διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν) and to the other because of the activity (διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν) by which it exists (γέγονεν).²⁸

One notes here the particular use of the verb τάσσω, which appears here as composed from συν- and ὑπο- to define the position of the third substance with respect to the first two, as the latter are differentiated by cause or by operation. The reference to σχέσις preceded by τάσσω clearly shows how σχέσις would be grasped by Eunomius along the same lines as λόγος—that is, he decides according to the semantic closeness that was justified inasmuch as relation is taken to be between relatives on the basis of a third element that functions as the standardizing term, as the measure of this relation.²⁹

According to Eunomius, then, the λόγος that fixes a certain σχέσις is the relationship between cause and effect, which binds substance and operations. Such a relationship is reflected in *natural* names.³⁰ All the elements of the

28 Πᾶς ὁ τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς δογμάτων συμπληροῦται λόγος ἐκ τε τῆς ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριωτάτης οὐσίας καὶ ἐκ τῆς δι' ἐκείνην μὲν οὐσίας μετ' ἐκείνην δὲ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων πρωτεοῦσης καὶ τρίτης γε τῆς μηδεμιᾶ μὲν τούτων συνταττομένης, ἀλλὰ τῇ μὲν διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν, τῇ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν καθ' ἣν γέγονεν ὑποταττομένης. *Eun* I 151,1–9 (GNO I, 71,28–72,7).

29 Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* V, 14, 1020b25–1021b11; Euclides, *Elementa* V, 3, 2.

30 DelCogliano argues that the Heterousians' theory of names, like that of Eunomius, goes beyond Plato's *Cratylus*. "The kinds of a naturalness found in the *Cratylus* and in the Heterousians have a mostly superficial resemblance in their shared belief that names reveals the nature of its bearer. The real differences between them are patent. While some passages of the dialogue about natural correctness are similar to the Heterousian claim that names reveal essence, the nature revealed by names according to the *Cratylus* falls far

name theory reemerge, those components of the theory of the difference of substance and subordination that Basil already negatively critiqued by this point. Eunomius thus establishes the difference of substances on the basis of the correspondance between substance, activities, and works—the very difference that is uncovered on the level of operations is attributed to activities, and thus to their respective, therefore differing, substances.

Inasmuch as the same activities (ἐνεργειῶν) produce identical works (ἔργων), and varied works reveal varied activities.³¹

For Eunomius the formula τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσει τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβατον indicates, then, the relationship that is itself the factor of differentiation by which various effects are traced back to various individual causes. It is a difference that remains intact and constant between the substances and the respective activities, works, and names.

In metaphysical terms, it is interesting to note that Eunomius does not speak of or give us the nature of the difference (διαφοράν), but it is understood in his formulation that there might be a kind of proportionality among the terms in relation to one another. Such proportionality is unable to establish any analogy if not between beings that are comparable with respect to a third element that transcends them. But what could ever transcend the essence of God? Furthermore, what kind of temporality might be introduced into the divine essence? The concept of being herein described is still one of being which exists in gradation, as more *or* less, which does not allow Eunomius to grasp the gist of Basil's discourse. The difference for Eunomius consists, as is also true of relation, of a sequential, or numerical, relationship.³² Names that likewise reflect the difference are presented as names of a univocal, absolute, and innate value.³³

B *The σχέσις in God: Reciprocity and Unity as God is Eternal*

The point which is in our interest to consider here—in light of the semantics of σχέσις—is that Eunomius' theology ends up being aporetic, in that it is

short of the essence of the namebearer that the Heteroousians wanted names to reveal". DelCogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, 61–62.

31 ἄτε δὴ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐνεργειῶν τὴν ταυτότητα τῶν ἔργων ἀποτελουσῶν, καὶ τῶν παρηλλαγμένων ἔργων παρηλλαγμένας τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐμφαινόντων. *Eun* I 153,7–154,1 (GNO I, 72,26–73,3).

32 Cf. G. Maspero, "Unità e relazione: la schesis nella dottrina trinitaria di Gregorio di Nissa" *PATH* 11 (2012) 301–326, 317.

33 Cf. J. Daniélou, "Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle", *REG* 69 (1959) 412–432, 414.

incapable of maintaining the reality of what has been revealed, which consists of the *reciprocity* of relation between the Father and Son. Indeed, introducing gradation means denying relation the nature of reciprocity in God Who is eternal, and this is precisely the great speculative contribution of Basil. This is one point on which Gregory vehemently presses Eunomius: Father, when referring to God, signifies the name of relation in eternity, and thus without separation (ἀδιαστάτως).³⁴ The ontological indication in this—provided by the relation implicit in the name Father—denies any difference in substance between ungenerated and generated on the basis of the reciprocity of the σχέσις, implied in the very *notion* of father. This is all made very clear when Gregory recalls how Christian tradition has desired to conserve the names Father, Son and Spirit because:

All men when they hear the titles “father” and “son” immediately recognize from the very names their intimate and natural relation to each other (πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν). Community of nature is inevitably suggested by these titles.³⁵

c *The σχέσις in God: Simplicity as God is Infinite*

Σχέσις as understood in its reciprocity is the pivotal point around which moves a further difficulty as read in the first book of *Contra Eunomium*. It has to do with the argument about the simplicity of the substance of God, where σχέσις appears in the passage focused on the infinite nature of God.

In cases where the existent by its nature does not admit of the worse, no limit is applicable to goodness; the infinite is not such by its relation to something else (τῇ πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσει), but itself by definition evades limitation.³⁶

From this, one can grasp how Gregory understands relation in infinity to be the self-reciprocation (αὐτὸ καθ'ἑαυτὸ). Thus, through reciprocity recognized in light of the revealed and relative name, Gregory defends divine simplicity.

34 Cf. *Ref Eun* 6,1–10 (GNO II, 314,26–315,6).

35 πάντες ἄνθρωποι πατὴρ καὶ υἱοῦ προσηγορίαν ἀκούσαντες εὐθὺς τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῶν καὶ φυσικὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ὑπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπιγινώσκουσι. *Eun* I 159,3–5 (GNO I, 75,3–5).

36 ἐφ' ὧν δὲ ἡ φύσις ἀνεπίδεκτός ἐστι τοῦ χειρόνος, ὅρος οὐκ ἐπινοεῖται τῆς ἀγαθότητος· τὸ δὲ ἀόριστον οὐ τῇ πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ καθ'ἑαυτὸ νοούμενον ἐκφεύγει τὸν ὅρον. *Eun* I 236,1–4 (GNO I, 95,25–96,2).

But if he detaches and alienates the beings from each other (ἀπ' ἀλλήλων), envisaging another being of the Onlybegotten alongside the Father, and yet another of the Spirit alongside the Onlybegotten, and applies to them concepts of greater and less, let it be noted that, while he appears to delight in what is simple, in reality he argues for the composite.³⁷

Observing which texts contain σχέσις within the progression of Gregory's argument allows one to draw upon certain considerations which are inherent to the placement of πρὸς together with the term σχέσις.

As is well-known, σχέσις is inserted into philosophical and theological discourse with a very close meaning to that of πρὸς τι. This word has a preposition that is used to mark the fact of several terms being placed in relation with one another:³⁸ in Gregory we thus find this characterization of σχέσις, assuming this preposition, in the passage πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσις, πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσις, πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν σχέσις, πρὸς σὲ σχέσις, πρὸς τινα σχέσις.³⁹ Relation is thereby set up like some reality together with its proper name, which is accompanied by a preposition that grants it a certain definition with respect to what one means to indicate. The name *relation* in and of itself does not indicate anything concrete, because what specifies relation is the series of terms placed in relation or connection to each other.

So what happens with Gregory? In his exposition of his theory of relative names—he will return to this at length in the *Contra Eunomium II* and *III*—he explicitly states that relation is *within the named things themselves*, showing how the relative name itself can have more meanings according to what that might be with respect to what is understood. This is what occupies sections 569–575 of the *Contra Eunomium I*, wherein Gregory argues the meanings of the term “Father” so as to show how in that term there is also the meaning of relation to the Son as much as there is, likewise, the meaning of being ungenerated.

37 εἰ δὲ διίστησι καὶ ἀποξενοῖ τὰς οὐσίας ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ἄλλην τοῦ μονογενοῦς παρὰ τὸν πατέρα, ἐτέραν δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος παρὰ τὴν τοῦ μονογενοῦς ἐννοῶν, καὶ τὸ πλέον καὶ τὸ ἑλαττον ἐπ' αὐτῶν λέγει, μὴ λανθανέτω τῷ μὲν δοκεῖν τὸ ἀπλοῦν χαριζόμενος, τῇ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ κατασκευάζων τὸ σύνθετον. *Eun I* 237,3–10 (GNO I, 96,6–12).

38 This is seen in what has been defined by the Grammarians (Dionysius Trace) who, on the basis of πρὸς τι, distinguish relative names from absolute names. On this topic, the notes in Moerschini are quite useful. See C. Moerschini, *Gregorio di Nissa. Teologia trinitaria*, 168, note 317. On the influence of the Grammarians in competing cultures, see J. Daniélou, “Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle”, 420.

39 Cf. *Eun I* 560; 564; 569. There are examples of this when Gregory tackles the argument

This distinction of the gnoseological relativity facilitates the display on the ontological level of how the revealed name “Father” can be the bearer of an immanent and relational significance in the divine essence, even beyond its being said to be a property of God.⁴⁰ Furthermore, whoever pronounces it can do so “independent of the particular relationship,” or otherwise taking on the relational meaning.⁴¹

D *The σχέσις in God: Freedom and Apophatism*

Hence, in this commentary on the Lord’s prayer (*Mt* 6:9) or the Abba Father (*Rm* 8:15), Gregory explains his moving from one relative name that indicates something of the knowledge one has of God to a name that *places in relation* and *expresses a relation*, which is something accomplished on the level of existence and not simply that of knowledge.⁴² Progress with respect to Basil is seen precisely in his explicating the theory of names that is already present in the second book of the *Adversus Eunomium*,⁴³ ultimately specifying the content of the relative name insofar as it touches upon the names of God and purposefully inserting the existential information into the corpus of our knowledge.

On the fixedness of the reciprocal relationship between the Father and the Son, Gregory comes into conflict with Eunomius in multiple places, since, on account of the infinitude of God’s nature, relation in God cannot be subject to any law that is not the reciprocity of the relation itself, which cannot be subordinated to law. Furthermore, contrary to Eunomius’ position,⁴⁴ there can never be any analogy of proportional correspondence between activities and God’s substance. And this is what is read in passages which include occurrences of

regarding relative names. In total, there are 75 places in which σχέσις appears with πρὸς, out of the approximately 150 times that σχέσις appears in any form in Gregory’s work.

40 The relativity of names is found in book two as well, wherein Gregory explains that thought is an operation of the mind and depends on the decisions of the one who speaks. It does not subsist in and of itself, but rather it has its subsistence in the choice of those who are in dialogue (οὐ καθ’ἑαυτὴν ὑφεστῶσα, ἀλλ’ἐν τῇ τῶν διαλεγομένων ὀρμῇ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχουσα: *Eun* II 334,10–335,1 [GNO I, 323,31–324,1]). For Gregory, the freedom of someone in dialogue, who makes the decision to use certain meanings that are then placed in dialogue, might give a relational significance or meaning to the relativity, or conventionality, of names.

41 Cf. *Eun* I 572–573 (GNO I, 191,14–192,2).

42 Cf. *Eun* I 573,1 (GNO I, 191,21). Cf. also *Eun* II 373,2 (GNO I, 335,11); *Eun* II 459,6 (GNO I, 360,22) and *Eun* II 559,1 (GNO I, 389,29).

43 Cf. *Adversus Eunomium* II 9 (SC 305, 36–38).

44 Here we are talking about the second way, as illustrated in the *Apologia*. Cf. *Apologia* 20 (Vaggione, 58).

σχέσις that contribute a revisiting of Eunomius' formula of the εἰρμόν,⁴⁵ seen in the places where Gregory comments on what kind of "bond" it is legitimate to think of in God.⁴⁶

The Bishop of Nyssa connects the bond (τὸν εἰρμόν) to what Eunomius means by innate ordering (συμφυῆ τάξις). Indeed, for Gregory innate ordering might be that which maintains a "bond invariable fixed to the reciprocal relationship" only if there is *not* separation of substance between the Father and Son, and only if a distinction of hypostasis is allowed.⁴⁷ The relational distinction that Gregory recognizes in the very same οὐσία allows him to consider the ordering of distinction between the Father and the Son not on the ontological plane, but rather in the sphere of logic—that is, not dividing, but distinguishing them according to causality in a manner of relation (in this sense the logical and the relational coincide). However, this is also true for the opposite: the relational distinction of the Father and the Son in the very οὐσία of God safeguards the immutability of the divine essence and the impossibility of knowing God's substance through notions which are derived from activities.⁴⁸ In this sense, assenting to the value of σχέσις in God thereby preserves apophaticism for three reasons: 1) the names of Father and Son are not identical to activities (ἐνεργεαί),

45 Οὕτω δὲ τούτων ἐχόντων καὶ τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλα σχέσει τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβατον διατηρούντων, προσήκει δὴπου τοὺς κατὰ τὴν συμφυῆ τοῖς πράγμασι τάξιν τὴν ἐξέτασιν ποιουμένους καὶ μὴ φύρειν ὁμοῦ πάντα καὶ συγγεῖν βιαζομένους, εἰ μὲν περὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις κινεῖτό τις ἀμφισβήτησις, ἐκ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προσεχῶν ταῖς οὐσίαις ἐνεργειῶν ποιεῖσθαι τῶν δεικνυμένων τὴν πίστιν καὶ τῶν ἀμβολομένων τὴν διάλυσιν, τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐνεργείαις ἀμφιβολίαν διαλύειν ἐκ τῶν οὐσιῶν. *Eun* I 406,1–11 (GNO I, 145,10–20). And we see σχέσις occur in the same formulation of *Eun* I 154,1–13 (GNO I, 73,3–15): substance and bond invariable and fixedness. In this case, that which precedes are the sections *Eun* I 373–385 on the unknowability of the divine-eternal nature, and the sections *Eun* I 386–405 wherein Gregory responds to the formula of proportion that repeated in an identical manner as has been said previously.

46 One might theorize that the theology used to develop the response to Eunomius regarding the fixed and invariable bond (τὸν εἰρμόν ἀπαράβατον), might have helped Gregory formulate, or distinguish, the formula τῆς σχετικῆς ἀκολουθίας τὸν λόγον of *Ref Eun* 98,5, the only place in the debate with Eunomius in which Gregory delineates the order of processions, bestowing upon "bond" (ἀκολουθία instead of εἰρμός) the character of a hierarchy of relational notions. This questions has been taken up by others. Cf. J. Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nisse*, Leiden 1970, 36–37.

47 Cf. *Eun* I 412–413 (GNO I, 146,23–147,13), where in an alternative form Eunomius considers the substance of the Father and the Son as two, separate, one apart from the other for reasons of their difference (ἀνομιότητος), according to nature (κατὰ τὴν φύσιν), and contrasts being untied by way of substance (ἢ γὰρ ἦνεται διὰ τῆς οὐσίας), so that the bond of reciprocal relation remains unaltered.

48 Cf. *Eun* I 419–422 (GNO I, 148,26–149,26).

for *in* God there is no change; 2) the relative names of Father and Son do not merely speak of a notion, but of a relational reciprocity; 3) this is not reducible to noetic content but suggests a true and proper alterity, or otherness, in one single essence, which nevertheless remains unknowable and unspeakable in itself.⁴⁹

We thus find that Gregory is working conceptually with regards to innate ordering and the distinction of relational reciprocity beginning with the immutability of the divine οὐσία and the σχέσις revealed by the divine names. One can thereby track, although it is formulated differently, the attention that Basil lends to the claims of the immutability of the divine substance (ἀπαράλλακτως)⁵⁰ and the natural conjunction (φυσική συνάφεια) of the relation implied in the name Father.

A further question tied to this discussion—by way of the occurrences of σχέσις—is therefore that of the relationship between a name and its notion (ἔννοια). Gregory's thought also takes a noteworthy turn with respect to this aspect. Whereas in the *Apologia Apologiae* Eunomius remains tied to a one-to-one relationship between the notion, name, and divine substance—though accepting Basil's argument on the centrality of the name of the Father instead of the attribute of ungenerated⁵¹—Gregory expounds on his thought on the Trinity as deeply centered on the σχέσις of the Father and the Son, which leads him—integrating Basil's theory of names—to consider relationship as existing between names and the unity of nature in two subjects (ἐν δύο τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς φύσεως).⁵²

E *The σχέσις in God: Unity and Will*

Gregory of Nyssa thus establishes that the unity of nature—distinct in the two subjects—is also one unity of will, characterizing “the natural bond” in a

49 The fact that it remains unknowable does not mean that for Gregory man is not included in this same relation. Cf. *Cant* I (GNO VI, 22,9–23,1).

50 Cf. Basil, *Epistula* 9 (Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile, Lettres*, tome I, Paris 1957, 39, 3,1–2).

51 In the section *Eun* I 552 ff. Gregory reproduces a passage from the *Apologia Apologiae* in which Eunomius cites Basil, but he omits the passage on the σχέσις, thereby completely passing over the reference to the introduction of the notion of the Son by way of the relation implicit in the name of the Father, and hence passing over any treatment of Basil regarding relative names (*Adversus Eunomium* I 5, 68–69 [SC 299, 176]); Gregory reintroduces this in the debate taking up once again the complete citation of Basil in the passage of *Eun* I 559,3–5 (GNO I, 188,3–5: καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἔννοιαν συνημμένως ἑαυτῇ διὰ τῆς σχέσεως συνεισάγειν).

52 *Eun* I 498,1–2 (GNO I, 170,13–14).

completely different way than Eunomius.⁵³ Gregory speaks of the natural conjunction defended by Basil, as unity of nature (κατὰ τὴν φύσιν) and communion of wills (καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν κοινωνίας).⁵⁴ Eunomius, interpreting it incorrectly, attributes it to a relationship of generation and subordination in the structure of ordering (τάξις) in created nature, thereby attributing two different substances to the Father and the Son.⁵⁵

Previously, Gregory marks the commonality of nature—indicated by the word “son” in the expression “son of man”—with the pericope τὸ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν οἰκεῖον,⁵⁶ where the affinity (οἰκεῖον) indicates both commonality among nature as well as an intimate relation. With this Gregory distinguishes within relation unity that is such by nature and that which is such by will. He does this not to introduce a two-fold or double principle of unity, but rather to point out that the relational nature of God is different from that necessitated by the term τάξις, something that we come across in created realities. The polemical context around the origin of all this as driven by Eunomius, actually gives the expression a particular relevance, namely, one that emphasizes the actual reciprocity of relation between Father and Son in the divine nature.

That the will in immanent relation also emerges in a final appearance of σχέσις is worth noting here. It is a quite poetic passage, wherein Gregory defines the honor that man must render unto God as if a relation of love (ἡ ἀγαπητικὴ σχέσις).⁵⁷ The passages that precede this one are dedicated to a description of the relationship between the Father and the Son, from which it is gathered that, being Son in a relationship of love with the Father, must also receive this same honor that is given in tribute to the Father.

53 Cf. *Eun* I 502 (GNO I, 171,15–23). Eunomius maintains that knowledge of Being through works of creation would be by acts of the will and not through the essence (*Apologia* 23–24). The difference in the Gregory of Nyssa's vision is that, according to Mülénberg, for him the will is not inferior to, but rather *part of* the essence. See E. Cavalcanti, *Studi Eunomiani*, Roma 1976, 71–72.

54 The Father and the Son are also one, the community of being and of purpose coalescing into unity (καὶ ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἓν εἰσι, τῆς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν κοινωνίας εἰς τὸ ἓν συνδραμούσης. *Eun* I 502,4–6 [GNO I, 171,18–20]).

55 Cf. *Eun* I 483,1–5 (GNO I, 166,13–18).

56 *Eun* I 298,6–7 (GNO I, 114,16–17).

57 *Eun* I 337,3–4 (GNO I, 127,4–5).

Conclusions

Tracing the history of references made to the σχέσις between the Father and the Son—considering Basil's initial response to Eunomius—it is possible to highlight how in the *Contra Eunomium I* the Cappodocian consideration of the revealed names affirms the reality of the reciprocal distinction of the Father and the Son as immanent to the divine essence, whereas it likewise becomes the vehicle of the dogmatic definition of the unity and unknowable, and thus unspeakable, nature of the substance of God. The distinction between the Father and the Son is acknowledged as real, and—instead of introducing multiplicity and separation, and thereby a subsequent duality of substance as Eunomius intended with the subordination of the Son to the Father—becomes the foundation of unity and simplicity precisely because of this consideration of the divine nature.

This logical passage is made possible by Gregory's firm adherence to Sacred Scripture and by his philosophical competency, a characteristic of his thought that led him to his description of a new unity as *in* God: the reality of the community within essence is introduced on account of the consideration of relation understood as implied by the revealed names, but considered in the sphere of the characteristics of divine nature—of which a theological reflection had already elaborated on its eternity and infinitude.

The unity of the divine essence, in the plurality of God's hypostasis, is therefore indicated not merely through a reference to the metaphysics of essence (communion of nature), but also through reference to the metaphysics of love (communion according to will; τῆς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν κοινωνίας). Unity is hereby configured as a reciprocal and infinite—hence unspeakable—disposition of love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father.

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La pneumatologie du *Contra Eunomium* I*

Elias D. Moutsoulas

La pneumatologie occupe une place de choix dans la Théologie de Grégoire de Nysse. Et cela non seulement parce que la foi en la divinité du Saint Esprit est l'un des dogmes fondamentaux de la foi trinitaire, mais à cause des circonstances particulières de l'époque de Grégoire et spécialement à cause de l'activité d'Eunome. Grégoire développe sa doctrine surtout dans ses discours *Contre Eunome*, comme aussi dans ses petits traités pneumatologiques. Dans notre étude nous nous bornerons surtout à son premier discours *Contre Eunome*, et parce qu'il est le sujet de notre Congrès, mais aussi parce que dans ce discours la pneumatologie de Grégoire se développe plus analytiquement qu'ailleurs. Comme nous le savons ce qui a provoqué la composition de ses discours fut l'*Apologie sur l'Apologie* composée par Eunome, pour réfuter l'œuvre de S. Basile *Contre Eunome*. Eunome, arien convaincu, essaie de donner un fondement philosophique à la négation tant de l'*homoousion* que de l'*homoiousion* du Fils, en absolutisant seulement une des propriétés de Dieu, l'agénésie en

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see E.D. Moutsoulas, "La pneumatologie du 'Contra Eunomium I'", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco – J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 381–390. For further bibliography from the same Author, see the monography: E.D. Moutsoulas, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης; and about Gregory's Pneumatology in a broader perspective: A. de Halleux, "Manifesté par le Fils. Aux origines d'une formule pneumatologique", *RTL* 20 (1989) 3–31; M.A.G. Haykin, *The Spirit of God. The Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century*, Leiden 1994; G.D. Panagopoulos, "Die Vermittlung des Sohnes beim ewigen Ausgang des heiligen Geistes aus dem Vater nach Gregors von Nyssa *Ad Ablabium*", in: V.H. Drecoll – M. Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the nth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2011, 383–397; A. Radde-Gallwitz, "Gregory of Nyssa's Pneumatology in context: The Spirit as Anointing and the history of the Trinitarian controversies", *JES* 19 (2011) 259–285; L.F. Mateo-Seco, "The Paternity of the Father and the Procession of the Holy Spirit: Some Historical Remarks on the Ecumenical Problem", in: G. Maspero – R.J. Wozniak (eds.), *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology. Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, London – New York 2012, 69–102; M. Brugarolas, *El Espíritu Santo de la divinidad a la procesión*, Pamplona 2012, 131–304; C. Moreschini, "Osservazioni sulla pneumatologia dei Cappadoci: preannunci del *Filioque*?", in: M. Gagliardi (ed.), *Il Filioque. A mille anni dal suo inserimento nel Credo a Roma (1014–2014)*, Città del Vaticano 2015, 117–146.

prétendant que celle-ci seulement peut exprimer l'essence de Dieu, qui est donnée par révélation à l'homme. Selon lui (Eunome utilise pour Dieu le mot « inengendré » (ἀγέννητος) et n'emploie le mot « père » que lorsqu'il s'agit des passages de la Bible) la distinction radicale est entre Dieu, qui n'est pas fait ni par lui-même ni par un autre et qui est « indivisible, simple et sans composition »¹, et tous les autres êtres, qui comme nés et créés sont d'une nature différente. Parmi ces êtres il y a une gradation. La première place est occupée par le Fils, qui est né directement par l'énergie de Dieu.

Le Fils est « γέννημα » (engendré). Selon Eunome ce terme exprime même son essence: « engendrée avant toutes choses par décision de Dieu le Père »². Pour Eunome le mot Fils exprime l'essence, tandis que le mot Père exprime l'énergie³. Il faut souligner aussi que pour Eunome l'identité de l'essence exige l'identité des noms⁴. Eunome donne une supériorité au Fils parmi tous ceux qui sont faits du néant, étant donné que selon la Bible il est leur créateur. Le verset de la Bible: « tout est fait par lui » donne l'occasion à Eunome d'y inclure le Saint Esprit. Créature est donc selon Eunome le « Paraclet » comme il préfère nommer le Saint Esprit⁵. Il est troisième non seulement « en ordre » mais aussi « en nature »⁶, « fait sur le commandement du Père et par l'activité du Fils ». Il est honoré en troisième lieu comme la première créature du Monogène, la plus grande de toutes et la seule qui soit telle⁷. La dépréciation qu'Eunome fait au Saint Esprit est claire. Entre lui et le Père inengendré intervient non seulement le Fils mais aussi l'énergie du Père, par laquelle le Fils est né, et celle du Fils, par laquelle il est fait. Eunome s'efforce de baser son enseignement que l'Esprit est fait par le Fils sur les passages 1 Cor 8,6 (*il n'y a qu'... un seul Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, par qui sont toutes choses*) et Joh 1,3 (*par lui tout a paru, et sans lui rien n'a paru de ce qui est paru*).

Le Paraclet est considéré comme serviteur du Fils pour la sanctification, l'enseignement et la confirmation des croyants⁸.

A cet enseignement d'Eunome S. Basile répond par ses trois discours, qui se réfèrent réciproquement aux trois personnes de la Trinité. Même avant de

1 Eunome, *Apologie* 8 (Vaggione 42).

2 Eunome, *Apologie* 12,10–12 (Vaggione 48).

3 Cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 24,1–4 (Vaggione 64).

4 Cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 24,22–28 (Vaggione 66).

5 Eunome, *Apologie* 20,17 (Vaggione 60).

6 Eunome, *Apologie* 25,4–5 (Vaggione 66).

7 Eunome, *Apologie* 25,23–25 (Vaggione 68); cf. *Apologie* 28,14–15 (Vaggione 74).

8 Cf. Eunome, *Apologie* 27,5–6 (Vaggione 70).

venir à son troisième discours il parle particulièrement du Saint Esprit, déjà aux deux premiers et il souligne sa divinité. Dans le premier discours et au paragraphe 13 Basile souligne que Dieu n'a pas révélé aux saints non seulement son essence mais même son nom, et au paragraphe suivant il dit que seulement le Fils et l'Esprit les connaissent⁹. Au paragraphe 19 il insiste sur le fait que la différence des personnes consiste seulement dans l'ordre de ces personnes et dans des attributs spécifiques à chacune des trois, tandis que la divinité est une. « C'est selon la notion de la substance, nous dit Basile lui même, que l'unité est pensée »¹⁰. Aux trois derniers paragraphes du deuxième discours Basile réfutant la doctrine d'Eunome selon laquelle le Fils est créature de l'inengendré et le Paraclet du Fils, remarque qu'Eunome néglige la menace que le Seigneur adresse à ceux qui blasphèment contre le Saint Esprit¹¹. En revenant au sujet de la divinité des trois personnes de la Trinité il dit qu'aucune activité du Fils ne se trouve séparée du Père « et que l'Esprit est selon le témoignage de l'Apôtre aussi bien du Père que du Fils »¹². Il ne faut pas oublier que Basile souligne que « cause de tout » est « le Dieu de l'univers » (ὁ θεὸς τῶν ὅλων), c'est à dire le Père, et que le Saint Esprit procède du Père. La raison de cette déclaration de Basile est qu'Eunome enlève l'Esprit du Père et l'attribue proprement au Monogène, pour révéler sa gloire¹³.

Dans son troisième discours Basile se référant particulièrement à tout ce qu'Eunome expose au 25^e paragraphe de son *Apologie* souligne que comme le Fils est second en ordre et en dignité, car il a comme principe et cause le Père, de la même façon le Saint Esprit est troisième « en dignité et en ordre ». Cela ne signifie pas qu'il est d'une nature étrangère¹⁴. Il n'est pas possible qu'il soit compté avec la création lui qui est compté dans la divine et bienheureuse Trinité¹⁵, étant donné que « chez lui la sainteté est nature tandis qu'aux créatures il est accordé d'être sanctifiées par participation »¹⁶. Il souligne aussi que la créature, et il se réfère évidemment à la nature raisonnable, c'est à dire l'homme, considère la sanctification comme le prix d'un progrès, et pour avoir trouvé grâce auprès de Dieu¹⁷, et en disposant d'une nature maîtresse d'elle même,

9 Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 13–14 (SC 299, 216–224).

10 Basile, *Contre Eunome* I 19 (SC 299, 242).

11 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 33 (SC 305, 136–138).

12 Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 34 (SC 305, 140).

13 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 34 (SC 305, 142).

14 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 1, 31–39 (SC 305, 146–148).

15 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 2, 27–29 (SC 305, 152).

16 Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 3 (SC 305, 156).

17 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 2 (SC 305, 154).

elle peut s'orienter vers le choix du bien au du mal. Au contraire le Saint Esprit est la source de la sanctification, c'est pour cela qu'il s'appelle Saint.

Puisque donc la nature même de l'Esprit Saint est la sanctification comment est-il possible qu'il soit d'une autre nature que le Père et le Fils? La « communauté des noms » (l'utilisation des mêmes noms) entre la Père, le Fils et le Saint Esprit n'indique pas une séparation mais une parenté de nature¹⁸. Cela est attesté pour le Saint Esprit par l'utilisation du nom Paraclet¹⁹. Au paragraphe suivant S. Basile parle des opérations du Saint Esprit qui sont identiques à celles des deux autres personnes de la Trinité. Par conséquent l'activité unique des trois personnes de la Trinité montre le caractère divin de la nature du Saint Esprit²⁰.

Finalement il souligne que « la vie en nous vient de Dieu par le Christ dans l'Esprit »²¹. Par conséquent le Saint Esprit possède la divinité non pas par participation mais par nature. Et le fait que le Baptême selon la tradition de Seigneur se fait au nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint Esprit est une preuve de la divinité de ce dernier²². En retournant au sujet de la sanctification par le Saint Esprit il souligne qu'il est impossible « que soient de la même nature le Sanctificateur et les sanctifiés, l'Enseignant et les enseignés, le Révéléateur et les êtres qui ont besoin de révélation »²³.

Mais il n'est pas possible à l'homme de préciser quelle est la nature du Saint Esprit²⁴. Ce que nous savons c'est qu'il se distingue des deux autres personnes de la Trinité car il n'est pas « inengendré », comme la Père, ni « Monogènes » comme le Fils. Le Saint Esprit est envoyé par Dieu (Le Père) (ἀποστελλόμενον) et se donné (χορηγούμενον) par le Fils. Il s'appelle « non pas serviteur mais saint, bon, propre au commandement, Esprit vivifiant, Esprit d'adoption, qui sait toutes les choses de Dieu ». De cette façon est sauvegardée l'unité dans la Trinité²⁵. En fin Basile donne l'interprétation orthodoxe des passages *Amos* 4,13 et *Joh* 1,3 et il réfute la prétention d'Eunome que le Saint Esprit est une créature.

Après un intervalle de plusieurs années Eunome a répondu à l'œuvre de S. Basile par l'*Apologie de l'Apologie*. Le texte d'Eunome est connu seulement par les extraits sauvés dans la réfutation que Grégoire de Nysse en a faite.

18 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 3,14–16 (SC 305, 156).

19 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 3,24–26 (SC 305, 156).

20 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 4,38–39 (SC 305, 160).

21 Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 4,52–53 (SC 305, 160–162).

22 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 5,33–37 (SC 305, 164).

23 Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 6,30–32 (SC 305, 168).

24 Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 6,24 (SC 305, 168).

25 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 6,36–42 (SC 305, 168–170).

Eunome a composé trois ou cinq livres. En tout cas aux trois livres d'Eunome correspondent les trois livres de Grégoire.

Eunome attaque Basile avec violence. Il dit qu'il tombe en contradictions. Au début du premier discours²⁶ Grégoire répond à l'attaque personnelle d'Eunome contre Basile. En laissant cette partie nous arrivons à ce qui concerne la doctrine. Eunome revient à son principe qu'une est « l'essence supérieure et principale » à laquelle suivent une seconde et une troisième. Il est caractéristique qu'il évite de les nommer en montrant de cette façon que le point de départ pour lui n'est pas la parole de Dieu exprimée par la Bible mais ses pré-suppositions philosophiques. Il caractérise le Saint Esprit comme « troisième » (essence) qui ne se lie à aucune des deux précédentes, mais qu'il est assujéti au premier par la cause et au second par l'énergie, par laquelle il est créé. Chaque essence pour lui est simple et a une valeur particulière. Ensuite Eunome développe sa théorie sur les énergies, à laquelle Grégoire répond explicitement. Avant de le faire Grégoire l'accuse d'avoir évité les voix évangéliques par lesquelles le Seigneur a délivré le mystère, car elles expriment la parenté de nature.

Bien qu'il y ait des passages dans son premier Discours où Grégoire se réfère spécialement au Saint Esprit, en général la considération est triadologique. Il y a aussi de passages qui parlent particulièrement du Fils. Même dans ces passages tout ce qui se réfère à sa divinité et à la différence de nature entre lui et les créatures est valable aussi pour le Saint Esprit, même si cela n'est pas dit explicitement.

Grégoire n'a pas consacré, comme Basile, un livre spécial au Saint Esprit. Mais, en réfutant la doctrine eunoméenne dans plusieurs passages il parle de lui. Plus particulièrement il en parle aux paragraphes 191–204 et 305–316 du *Contre Eunome* 1. Sa pensée centrale est que l'Esprit comme le Fils n'appartiennent pas à la nature créée mais à la nature incréée. Réfutant la phrase d'Eunome selon laquelle l'Esprit ne se lie pas au Père et au Fils mais il est soumis à tous les deux il s'interroge sur la signification du terme « soumission ». Des différents sens du terme dans la Bible il conclut que le Saint Esprit ne « se soumet » pas mais il se lie (aux deux autres personnes). Saint Basile avait déjà utilisé le verbe (συνάσσεσθαι) pour faire distinguer le, Saint Esprit des créatures. Le même Père avait remarqué que l'ordre dans le nombre ne constitue pas une différence de nature²⁷. Même dans la Bible l'ordre des noms varie, sans que cela puisse signifier soumission de ce qui suit à ce qui précède. Et tout ce qu'Eunome dit sur les énergies de Dieu et que permet à Grégoire d'en

26 Cf. CE I 1–147 (GNO I, 22–71).

27 CE I 194–204 (GNO I, 83,14–86,16).

parler explicitement a pour but de montrer qu'il n'y a aucun lien entre les personnes de la Trinité, qu'elles sont séparées entre elles selon l'essence, et qu'elles sont d'une nature étrangère et d'une différenciation qui ne se concile pas. Au contraire pour Grégoire « la simplicité de la Sainte Trinité ne reconnaît pas le plus et le moins ». Lorsqu'Eunome parle d'essences majeures et mineures il « constitue la divinité composée ». Particulièrement il déprécie l'Esprit plus que le Fils, car selon lui il est d'une nature plus composée. Selon Eunome le Fils et l'Esprit sont des œuvres²⁸ et les forces qui les ont constitués sont des énergies. Ces énergies, selon sa doctrine sont proportionnées à l'œuvre qu'elles accomplissent.

Dans sa critique de la doctrine de l'énergie d'Eunome, Grégoire pose la question si l'énergie est une hypostase ou non. Si elle n'est pas hypostase il se demande comment ce qui existe vient de ce qui n'existe pas. Dans le cas où il s'agirait d'une hypostase le Fils tombe à la troisième place et le Saint Esprit à la cinquième, puisqu'entre eux se placent les énergies qui les ont constitués. Ensuite Grégoire se réfère à la manière de distinction des êtres²⁹.

Bien que du premier abord on ait l'impression que la distinction principale est celle entre le monde matériel et le monde spirituel étant donné que le créé et l'incrée se présentent comme subdivisions du monde spirituel, une étude plus approfondie prouve que la distinction essentielle est celle entre le monde créé et le monde incrée. On peut tirer cela de l'enseignement de Grégoire en général, mais il le dit aussi expressément³⁰. Même sur ce point Basile a précédé Grégoire³¹.

Les trois personnes de la Trinité appartiennent toutes à la nature incrée. Grégoire fait la distinction entre le Père qui est sans cause, et les deux autres personnes qui ont leur cause au Père. Chaque personne de la Trinité a sa propre hypostase et ses propriétés. De ces propriétés quelques unes sont communes aux trois personnes et quelques unes non. Le propre et incommunicable pour le Père est qu'il est « Inengendré » et pour le Fils qu'il est « Monogénés ». Le Saint Esprit se distingue, car il n'a pas les propriétés du Père et du Fils. Grégoire dit que le Saint Esprit n'est pas né du Père comme le Fils, et qu'il se manifeste par le Fils. Le fait qu'il se manifeste par le Fils ne signifie pas un abaissement de degré de l'Esprit au niveau des créatures, puisqu'il se distingue

28 Cf. CE I 241–243 (GNO I, 97,12–98,9).

29 Cf. CE I 270 (GNO I, 105); il répète cette distinction au CE I 295 (GNO I, 113).

30 Cf. CE I 361 (GNO I, 133).

31 Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 31 (SC 305, 128–132): Il y a en effet, deux réalités, la création et la divinité: la création est rangée du côté du service et de l'obéissance, et la divinité commande et exerce la souveraineté.

de celles-ci, car il est, interchangeable, inaltérable, et ne reçoit pas la bonté du dehors. Dans le texte de Grégoire nous lisons que la cause de l'existence de l'Esprit se trouve dans le Père. Cela W. Jaeger le laisse tomber bien qu'il soit présent dans tous les manuscrits³². Nous ne connaissons pas la raison. Non seulement cet enseignement est en accord avec toute la doctrine de Grégoire, mais il y a d'autres passages chez Grégoire où la même chose est dite expressément³³.

Grégoire montre que Eunome pour son enseignement veut renverser les dogmes fondamentaux de la foi, par lesquelles le salut peut être atteint. Ni le Fils n'appartient aux créatures³⁴ ni le Saint Esprit n'est un de ceux qui sont créés par le Fils. L'apôtre Paul, quand il a parlé de la création n'a pas commémoré la nature de l'Esprit et le Seigneur lorsqu'il a commémoré la force vivifiante il a lié l'Esprit au Père et à lui même. En se basant sur la phrase d'Eunome selon laquelle la valeur des œuvres correspond à la valeur de l'énergie qui les produit, il remarque que « en ce qui concerne la première nature (la nature divine) qui dépasse l'entendement humain il n'y a pas la distinction du temps »³⁵. En même temps il n'y a pas le sens de la distance³⁶. Saint Basile déjà avait remarqué que la notion de « cause » fait seulement la distinction entre les personnes de la Trinité.

C'est une occasion pour Grégoire ici d'exalter encore une fois l'impossibilité de l'homme à comprendre la nature divine³⁷. Les trois personnes de la Trinité se caractérisent comme « des admirables choses et noms »³⁸. En se référant à la relation des trois personnes il dit que le Fils se comprend avec le Père, sans aucun intervalle entre eux (ἀδιαστάτως) et par le Fils et avec le Fils avant qu'aucune pensée vide et sans substance puisse intervenir, tout de suite le Saint Esprit se comprend, sans que quelque chose manque en le comparant au Fils, de telle façon qu'on puisse concevoir le Monogène sans l'Esprit. L'Esprit a aussi trouvé la cause de son existence dans le Père, comme le Monogène qui est lumière. Entre lui et les deux autres personnes de la Trinité il n'y a pas de distance ou changement de nature. Car il n'y a pas de différence dans la nature

32 Cf. CE I 280 (GNO I, 108,16–17).

33 Cf. CE I 378 (GNO I, 138,12–13); cf. CE I 361 (GNO I, 134,1–2).

34 Grégoire donne l'interprétation juste de *Prov* 8, 22.

35 CE I 341 (GNO I, 128,13–14).

36 Cf. CE I 360 (GNO I, 133,21).

37 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* III 6 (SC 305, 166–170) qui se réfère particulièrement au Saint Esprit.

38 CE I 377 (GNO I, 137,28–29).

incrée et le Saint Esprit appartient à la nature incrée³⁹. Comme le Fils est la gloire du Père, de la même façon l'Esprit est la gloire du Fils. Cette phrase ne signifie pas diminution de l'Esprit puisqu'il est considéré avec le Fils et le Père.

Après la critique de la doctrine d'Eunome sur l'énergie où il a montré que la même énergie peut donner de résultats différents, Grégoire remarque que si la différence dans la Trinité était considérée seulement dans l'ordre, et si cela ne menaçait pas l'indépendance des hypostases, il n'y aurait aucune objection⁴⁰.

Un autre point de la critique de Grégoire concerne la possibilité de la connaissance de l'essence par les énergies⁴¹. Grégoire utilise les paroles mêmes d'Eunome selon lesquelles seulement la quantité d'énergie qui a été dépensée peut être considérée dans l'œuvre effectuée par elle. Même si les essences étaient connues par les énergies, remarque Grégoire, tu reconnaitras que la nature de l'Esprit est incompréhensible, puisque tu n'as pas une telle énergie par laquelle tu pourrais concevoir la nature de l'Esprit⁴². Si donc l'Esprit est incompréhensible comment est-il possible de comprendre l'essence qui, selon Eunome, est au dessus de lui ?

Mais nous réfléchissons sur ce qui dans son essence dépasse nos capacités de comprendre par ce qui arrive à notre connaissance⁴³. Il s'agit des œuvres de la providence qui sont les mêmes pour le Père et le Fils (ici le Saint Esprit n'est pas mentionné mais il est sous-entendu). Encore une fois il répète que seulement la notion de cause distingue le Fils du Père et par conséquent sous tous les autres sens le (ἄναρχον) « sans commencement » se réfère aussi au Fils. (Pour la Trinité le temps n'a pas de place).

A la critique d'Eunome à Basile qui doit opter ou pour deux ἀρχαί inengendrés ou pour la même essence (οὐσία) qui comme le Père et Fils naît et est née, Grégoire répond que l'Église n'accepte pas deux principes mais une nature en différentes hypostases⁴⁴.

Et la phrase « moi et le Père nous sommes un » signifie qu'il y a une cause pour le Fils mais aussi qu'il est de la même nature avec le Père⁴⁵ sans que la différence des hypostases soit abolie. Par conséquent la différence des personnes ne divise pas l'unité de l'essence. Si « l'agennésie » et la « gennesie » (naissance)

39 Cf. CE I 379 (GNO I, 138).

40 Cf. CE I 413 (GNO I, 147,5-12).

41 Cf. CE I 420-422 (GNO I, 149).

42 Cf. CE I 426 (GNO I, 151,2-5).

43 Cf. CE I 443-444 (GNO I, 155).

44 Cf. CE I 484 (GNO I, 166,25-26).

45 Cf. CE I 503 (GNO I, 171,24-26).

étaient des essences nous aboutirions au dogme manichéen (qui prêche deux principes). De l'autre côté si nous, gardions toutes les prérogatives pour la personne du Père nous aurions privé le Christ de tous les attributs que la Sainte Ecriture lui donne.

Grégoire défend le dogme de la monarchie en prêchant une divinité, un principe, une autorité de tout. Par le Seigneur qui est principe de tout et qui par le Saint Esprit illumine nos cœurs, nous sommes conduits à celui qui est au-dessus de tout principe, Dieu, qui domine tout⁴⁶. Grégoire dit que « nous avançons du Père par le Fils au Saint Esprit »⁴⁷. Comme le soleil est cause du rayonnement, qui existe en même temps que lui, de la même façon le Fils par rapport au Père. Mais puisque les exemples du monde naturel peuvent être mal interprétés, Grégoire parle d'un autre soleil qui est né du précédent et qui brille en même temps que lui, ayant la même beauté, force et splendeur. Et en suite une autre lumière, le Saint Esprit, qui ne se sépare pas de la lumière qui est née, mais brille par celui qui trouve la cause de son existence (hypostase) dans la première lumière. Le Saint Esprit ne manque rien de la grâce illuminatrice, mais possédant la perfection au plus haut degré il se considère avec le Père et le Fils, il s'énumère avec eux et il conduit à leur lumière tous ceux qui sont dignes d'y participer.

La fin du sermon consiste en une longue recherche des termes Père et inengendré, provoquée par une remarque d'Eunome à Basile, de caractère injurieux et qui voudrait le ridiculiser.

Basile comme Grégoire n'était pas contre le terme « *agénnetos* » mais il évitait de l'utiliser et parce qu'il ne se trouvait pas dans la Bible et parce qu'il pourrait conduire à des malentendus, comme ce fut le cas avec Eunome. Pour Basile et Grégoire le terme « Père » peut signifier en même temps et qu'il a engendré le Fils et qu'aucune cause ne se trouve devant lui⁴⁸. Grégoire insiste sur le fait que les mots lorsqu'ils se réfèrent à Dieu prennent un autre sens. « Selon la mesure de la distance des natures se sépare le sens des mots »⁴⁹. Grégoire utilise l'exemple du cercle qui n'a ni commencement ni fin pour mettre l'accent sur l'éternité de la nature divine⁵⁰. L'inengendré se réfère seulement au début. L'infini dit qu'il n'a pas de fin. Par conséquent l'utilisation d'un terme seulement est déraisonnable. Mais en même temps il est déraisonnable d'accepter que l'essence de Dieu se compose de deux choses opposées comme

46 Cf. CE I 531 (GNO I, 180,7–8): τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεόν.

47 CE I 532 (GNO I, 180,13–14).

48 Cf. CE I 611 (GNO I, 202,27–203,1).

49 CE I 620 (GNO I, 205,8–10).

50 Cf. CE I 668 (GNO I, 218,8–10).

sont l'inengendré et l'infini. Le résultat pour Grégoire est que la simplicité des dogmes de la vérité considère Dieu comme il est, ne pouvant pas l'enfermer dans un nom ou dans une notion ou dans quelque autre pensée compréhensible⁵¹.

Grégoire aboutit en disant que le Fils par sa naissance se lie à « l'agenésie » du Père. Et comme le Fils, se lie au Père, de la même façon le Saint Esprit vient après le Fils, qui dans la pensée seulement selon la notion de cause est considéré avant lui. Nous ne croyons pas qu'il considère le Fils comme cause de l'Esprit, car dans ce cas là nous aurions deux causes dans la Trinité.

Nous avons essayé de donner en peu de mots la doctrine de Grégoire de Nysse sur le Saint Esprit d'après ce qu'il dit dans son *Contre Eunome* I. Comme nous avons vu Grégoire a suivi son frère Basile. Mais bien que la pensée de Grégoire peut-être considérée comme prolongement de celle de son frère, elle ne manque pas d'originalité. Deux choses sur lesquelles Grégoire insiste plus que Basile, et qu'il développe plus dans d'autres passages que ceux que nous étudions dans le *Contre Eunome* I, sont l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu ou les limites de la connaissance humaine, et l'unité d'opération des trois personnes de la Trinité. Le dernier point s'explique bien par le danger des Pneumatomaques qui obligeaient Grégoire d'insister sur l'unité de, nature des trois personnes de la Trinité et sur leur énergie commune. Sur la doctrine de l'énergie Grégoire est déjà assez explicite dans son *Contre Eunome* I. Ce qui est remarquable chez lui c'est l'utilisation plus large de la pensée philosophique et en même temps la considération de la révélation comme première source de la vérité.

Avant de terminer ma communication je voudrais insister sur un point, sur lequel se sont exprimées des opinions contradictoires. Il s'agit du problème de la procession du Saint Esprit, un problème délicat qui a provoqué tant de disputes entre l'Orient et l'Occident. Ma prétention n'est autre que d'essayer de donner la vraie pensée de Grégoire. K. Holl dans son étude *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern* avait nié que Grégoire acceptait le Filioque⁵². Au contraire Th. Dams dans une thèse très importante intitulée *La controverse Eunoméenne*, répète à plusieurs reprises que non seulement Grégoire mais même Saint Basile l'acceptent⁵³.

Une étude attentive des deux auteurs prouve que Dams sur ce point n'a pas raison et la critique qu'il fait à Holl est injuste⁵⁴. Comme Holl remarque le

51 Cf. *CE* I 683 (GNO I, 222,18–21).

52 K. Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den Grossen Kappadoziern*, Tübingen 1904, 214–215.

53 Th. Dams, *La controverse eunoméenne*, Paris 1952.

54 *Ibid.*, 211.

δι' υιοῦ que Grégoire utilise comme équivalent selon lui d'ἐκπορεύεσθαι, terme se trouvant déjà dans l'évangile de saint Jean (15,26), n'a pas le sens du filioque. Plusieurs sont les textes où Grégoire dit que seule et unique « αἰτία » de la Trinité est le Père. Holl considère le « δι' υιοῦ » comme une réponse aux Pneumatomaques, qui l'accusaient de concevoir l'Esprit comme frère du Fils.

En ce qui concerne saint Basile, Dams trouve que le passage *Contre Eunome* II, 32 prouve que le Saint Esprit vient du Fils comme celui-ci vient du Père, et qu'il vient par le Fils du Père, parce qu'aucune énergie du Fils n'est coupée du Père « parce que toute la vie du Père va au Fils ». Mais dans le *CE* II, 32 Basile ne fait que présenter la doctrine d'Eunome sur la question. Venons maintenant à Grégoire.

En étudiant dans les paragraphes 270–281 où Grégoire parle des idiomes des Personnes il prétend que le Saint Esprit provient du Père et du Fils. Mais l'expression « διὰ τοῦ υιοῦ πεφηνέναι » n'a pas ce sens. Par cette phrase, Grégoire veut montrer que le Saint Esprit appartient à la sainte Trinité et non à la nature créée. Pour appuyer sa thèse Dams se réfère aussi au texte *Contre Eunome* III/5 12. Mais la phrase « πνεῦμα κυρίου » ne dit rien sur la procession du Saint Esprit. Grégoire encore remarque que ce terme ne montre que la supériorité de la nature de l'Esprit et la distinction de son hypostase. Comme le Κύριος est « πνεῦμα », de la même façon le « πνεῦμα » est « κύριον ». (N'oublions pas que ce terme est appliqué au Saint Esprit par le symbole du II Concile oecuménique dans la rédaction duquel Grégoire a joué un grand rôle).

M. Parmentier a très bien vu cette réciprocité. Parlant du terme « ζωοποιόν » (*vivificantem*) que Grégoire emploie aussi pour le Saint Esprit et qui se trouve après « κύριον » dans le Crédo de Constantinople, il dit dans la conclusion de sa thèse « Gregory of Nyssa and the Holy Spirit »: « By a word like *lifegiving* he transferred the paradox of the unity-in-diversity into the very attribute: the Holy Spirit, the lifegiver, gives the life, which is Christ. But Christ grants the Spirit to mankind also. It is the double character of both person and gift, which is now also appeared to the Lord himself, which solves the problem. Christ was always easily understood as a person, the Spirit as a gift. Now the Holy Spirit could be better understood as a person, because Christ could be understood as a gift, and vice versa »⁵⁵. N'oublions pas que le Crédo de Constantinople après « κύριον » (dominant) et « ζωοποιόν » (*vivificantem*) donne le « τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον » (qui procède du Père)⁵⁶.

55 M. Parmentier, « St. Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit », *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 60 (1978) 724.

56 Cf. Basile, *Contre Eunome* II 34 (SC 305, 140–142).

Dams mentionne les paragraphes 378–385 du *Contre Eunome* I, où Grégoire dit que la cause de l'Esprit est le Père (θεὸς τῶν ὅλων). Mais en traitant dans le passage 530–534 l'expression « δι' αὐτοῦ μὲν ἐκλάμπον » il parle d'une procession de l'Esprit par le Fils. Cette phrase ne se réfère pas aux idiomes incommunicables des trois personnes de la Trinité mais exprime leur nature commune. Grégoire dit tout de suite que le Saint Esprit a la cause de son hypostase au « πρωτότυπον φῶς » (à la première lumière)⁵⁷.

Dams reconnaît que selon Grégoire le Père est le « *Kephalaion* » de la vie trinitaire. Cela ne l'empêche pas de dire six lignes plus bas que le Saint Esprit procède du Fils⁵⁸. La faute selon nous de Dams est qu'il ne fait pas la distinction entre les prépositions « ἐκ » (de) et « διὰ » (par). Mais ce problème demande une étude plus détaillée qui ne peut se faire maintenant. Le but de notre étude n'était pas d'épuiser le sujet mais de soulever la question et de montrer l'importance que la pneumatologie occupe dans la pensée théologique de Grégoire.

57 Cf. CE I 533 (GNO I, 180,20–181,5).

58 Th. Dams, *La controverse eunoméenne*, Paris 1952, 244.

Christology and Soteriology in the *Contra Eunomium I*

Lucas F. Mateo-Seco

The central theme of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium I* is a controversy that had been causing strife for many years, the same controversy in which his brother Basil had been thoroughly involved: the unity and the trinity of God. It is a truth that Gregory considers to be a distinctive characteristic of the Christian revelation of God, distinguishing it from both Judaism and paganism.¹

Moreover, the trinity and unity of God is a mystery that Gregory, like his brother Basil, understands in close relation with the salvation and divinization of man.² Both perspectives—the mystery of the trinity and the salvation of man—directly affect the Christology, as Gregory himself notes:³ the generation of the Word is the same question as that of Christ's divine filiation; and, according to Gregory's rich baptismal theology, our salvation depends on that divine filiation. Finally, Gregory's dispute with Eunomius is almost contemporaneous with another controversy in which Gregory will be thoroughly involved: the rejection of the Christology of Apollinaris.⁴ This way, although the 'Christological question' is not the center of *CE I*, it is significantly present in the text.

Bernard Pottier proposes the following 'organization' of *CE* which serves as a good description of the principal content in each of the books: *CE I, Metaphysics and Trinity*; *CE II, Philosophy of Language*; *CE III, Christology*.⁵ This does

1 Cf. *CE I* 177 and 262 (GNO I, 79 and 103). A recurring theme in Gregory's works: cf., e.g., *Or Cat* 1 (GNO III/4, 8; SC 453, 144).

2 Basil, in defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, had argued from the process of man's 'divinization' that is realized by the Holy Spirit. (cf. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 9 [SC 17bis, 145–148]). Gregory appeals to the same argumentation in *CE I* 288–291 (GNO I, 111–112; SC 524, 100–102).

3 Cf. *CE I* 288–291 (GNO I, 111–112; SC 524, 100–102).

4 *CE I* was written in AD 380 in seventeen days; *Adv. Apollinarium* in 382/383, according to Daniélou, or, according to Lietzmann and Mühlenberg, 387 at the earliest (Cf. P. Maraval, "Chronology of works," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 154–155). In the rigor with which Gregory rejects Apollinaris of Laodicea's position, requiring that he confess that Christ is perfect man, and specifically that he has a body, the well-known thought of Athanasius seems to emerge, cf. Athanasius, *De incarnatione Verbi*, 9 (SC 199, 294–296).

5 B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 23.

not mean, however, that the Christology is absent from *CE I* and *CE II*. Johannes Zachhuber has studied the Christology of *CE II*, focusing especially on the application of the Christological titles to the Lord.⁶ The present study focuses on the analysis of the Christological elements present in *CE I*, emphasizing their convergence with the core of Gregory's thought.

The Great Divergence

Already advanced in *CE I*, Gregory lays out what he considers the key difference with Eunomius:

The whole conflict and doctrinal dispute between the churchmen and the Anomeans is about whether we should consider the Son and the Spirit to be created, as our opponents say, or of the uncreated nature, as the church faith holds.⁷

As A. Mosshammer describes it,⁸ the difference is abysmal, as is the difference between created and uncreated in Gregory's thought. It is in vain that Eunomius attempts to exalt the Word by saying that although he is created, he is the creator of all other creatures. This does not satisfy the 'churchmen', who believe it is necessary to explicitly confess that the Word and the Spirit are uncreated.

Throughout *CE I*, as the opportunity presents itself, Gregory provides the various reasons on which he bases his argument in order to defend the perfect divinity of the Son and the Spirit. He asserts the faith of the Church as guarantee of the doctrine that he sets forth⁹ and recalls that it is our Lord himself who has 'communicated' to us the mystery of the Trinitarian equality.¹⁰ He appeals to the authority of Nicaea,¹¹ and he employs the argument of the supreme honor

6 J. Zachhuber, "Cristological Titles—Conceptually Applied? (*CE II* 294–358)," in: L. Karfíková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Translation with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004)*, Leiden 2007, 257–278.

7 *CE I* 220 (GNO I, 90).

8 A.A. Mosshammer, "The Created and the Uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium I* 270–295 (GNO I, 105–113)," *vid. supra*, 384–411.

9 Cf. *CE I* 110 (GNO I, 25).

10 Cf. *CE I* 156 (GNO I, 74).

11 Cf. *CE I* 136–138 (GNO I, 67–68).

and love that the Son deserves, and that could not be paid him if he pertained to the sphere of the created.¹²

Among all of these arguments, there is one that conveys not only the overall vision that Gregory has of Christian teaching and the connection of certain truths with others, but also his clear recognition that no ambiguity should be tolerated with respect to the perfect divinity of the Son. It is that the entire faith of the Church depends on the acceptance or rejection of the affirmation that Christ is God.

In the beginning of the actual argumentative portion of *CE* I, Gregory draws attention to the consequences that follow from Eunomius' position:

In this case therefore, if the Father's being is authentically so called, but that of the Son and Spirit never are, surely that is an obvious denial of the saving proclamation (κήρυγμα)? So let them turn back again from the church to the synagogues of the Jews, since by not according authentic existence to the Son they argue that he does not exist at all; the inauthentic is the same as the nonexistent.¹³

The dilemma is clear: either one accepts the perfect filiation of the Son, thus admitting that he is of the same substance as the Father, or the 'saving kerygma' is not accepted. In other words, to deny the perfect divinity of the Son is to reject the salvation that Christianity preaches. This is not a mere tactical move, attempting to place Eunomius at a disadvantage or even placing him outside of 'Christianity'.¹⁴ Rather, it is something more: it is a matter of defending the identity of the Christian faith. Like Basil,¹⁵ Gregory also uses the argument that Eunomius devalues the dignity of Christ even more so than the Jews:

It was a complaint of the Jews that the Lord (Κύριον) was considered to be the Son of the God over all. These men also object to those who truly make the same confession about him. The Jews thought they were honouring

¹² Cf. *CE* I 266; 333; 336–340 (GNO I, 104; 125–126; 126–128).

¹³ *CE* I 179 (GNO I, 79).

¹⁴ Gregory writes the *Refutatio* probably in the second half of 383 (cf. P. Maraval, "Chronology of Works," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 152). As B. Pottier notes, in this work "Grégoire ne fait qu'achever un ennemi déjà complètement vaincu. Lorsqu'il écrit, Eunome n'est plus considéré comme chrétien, et tous le savent" (B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 62).

¹⁵ Cf. Basil, *Contra Eunomium* I 24 (SC 289, 256–260).

the God of the universe by excluding the Son from like honour. These also bestow the same on the One over all, bestowing honour on the Father by taking away the glory of the Lord (Κυρίου).¹⁶

Gregory is referring to Christ, for whom he uses the title Κύριος in order to present Him as God. Eunomius does not reject this title, though he accommodates it to his particular system of gradation between the Father, Son, and Spirit.¹⁷ The argument of this paragraph is connected to the most personal in Gregory's thought: the Eunomians dishonor the Son by not paying him the honor due to God. They fall into absurdity claiming to honor the Father by dishonoring the Son. For Gregory, the equality of honor paid to the Father, Son, and Spirit, as reflected in the baptismal liturgy, is an indication of the substantial equality existing among the three. It is an argument amply present in the earlier theological tradition, and in reference to the Spirit, especially present in Basil.¹⁸

Honor and Love

In this respect, attention should be given to this reflection of Gregory: the honor due to God is nothing other than love. Supreme honor is supreme love. Supreme honor is equivalent to love *above all things* (cf. Mt 22:37). It is not, then, a secondary issue that Gregory addresses when speaking about the perfect divinity of Christ, but the central issue of his spiritual teaching. And at the center of this teaching is the gift of supreme love, as exemplified by Saint Paul.¹⁹ However, such love can only be given to Christ in justice if he is perfect God. Therefore, it is Gregory's entire spiritual teaching that Eunomius calls into question and that Gregory must defend, following Saint Paul:²⁰

The reason is that human honour to the divine when correctly understood is nothing but a loving attitude and the acknowledgement of the

¹⁶ CE I 266 (GNO I, 104).

¹⁷ CE I 166–170 (GNO I, 75–76).

¹⁸ Cf., e.g., Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 19 (SC 17bis, 199–203).

¹⁹ Saint Paul “had accomplished and accurately imitated him in a manner to show the Lord expressed in his own person. By careful imitation Paul became a model so that no longer is Paul perceived as living and speaking but Christ lives in him” *Perf* 5 (GNO VIII/1, 174–175).

²⁰ The imitation of Christ, which is the key component of the Christian's ascetic struggle, leads to a mystical life in Christ. Cf. *Inst* 98–99 (GNO VIII/1, 87–88).

good things that belong to it, and it seems to me that the idea, that the Son must be honoured just as the Father is (*John* 5:23), was used by the Word instead of love. It is by loving God with all the heart and strength (*Mk* 12:39 par.) that the law bids us yield him honour, and in this place God the Word legislates for equality of love when he says that the Son is to be honoured just as the Father is.²¹

These words assume a very close unity between the Word and Christ, i.e., the existence of a single subject in Christ. In fact, Gregory names the Son as the subject of the verbs that in *John* 5:19–23 have Jesus as their subject (it is Jesus who says *that all may honor the Son as they honor the Father*). This can also be seen in other places: Eunomius, says Gregory, believes that “the one who is now glorified in the Father’s glory (cf. *John* 13:31) and who will be revealed in the day of judgment (cf. *2 Tes* 2:6),” being a work, matches the activity which produces him.²² Defending the divinity of the Word, then, is equivalent to defending the reason that justifies that supreme love be given to Christ.

Gregory concludes the passage we are commenting on, insisting on the identification between ‘honor’ and ‘love’:

It could not be said that love should come from the whole heart and strength, but honour from only half. So if the Son is honoured from the whole heart because all love is offered to him, what thinking will discover the extra honour, when the whole heart through love is freely giving him the greatest possible degree of honour?²³

Gregory discovers here the underlying reason that moves him to write against Eunomius and, it is possible, even to consider him a non-Christian: the supreme love that Christians offer to Christ. It is the entire itinerary of his spiritual teaching and the coherence of his thought that is behind his determined rejection of the Eunomian doctrine. These are reasons that go beyond the defense of his brother or the strategies of the ecclesiastical politics of the time; they are reasons that are clearly present throughout *CE*. The resolution with which Gregory criticizes the Eunomian position is influenced by the teaching of *Virg, Vit Moys, In Cant* and his entire baptismal theology, as can be seen in *Or Cat*.

²¹ *CE* I 337 (GNO I, 127).

²² *CE* I 246 (GNO I, 98–99); see also *CE* I 335–336 (GNO I, 126–127).

²³ *CE* I 340 (GNO I, 127–128).

The fundamental reason that drives Gregory could be summarized in the following way: Christians render supreme love to Christ, but Christ only ‘merits’ supreme love if He is equal in everything to the Father. The theological tradition and spiritual tradition of which Gregory perceives himself responsible thus necessitates the defense of the perfect divinity of the Word. It is likewise necessitated by his conception of man and man’s capacity for the infinite. Only that which is absolutely infinite can eternally attract the heart of man.

The Unity of Christ

Eunomius and Gregory are clear on the issue that faces them: the way in which they conceive the eternal generation of the Logos. Gregory dedicates many pages to this issue in *CE I*.²⁴ To speak of the generation of the Word is the same as speaking of Christ’s divine filiation. The unity and complexity of the subject whose generation they dispute is evident: it is Christ, Son and Lord. This is seen in Gregory’s description of the generation of the Word according to the Eunomians: they invent, says Gregory, “an operation prior to the hypostasis of Christ (τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑποστάσεως),” saying that the Word is effect of this operation.²⁵

Gregory’s phrase is strong, although logically it cannot have the same strict meaning it would have if it came from a post-Chalcedonian writer. Note, however, that Gregory calls the Word ‘hypostasis’ of Christ, i.e., the underlying reality of Christ. This is twenty years after the Synod of Alexandria (AD 362) where the use of the terms *ousia* and *hypostasis* was clarified. Therefore, to say that the Word is the hypostasis of Christ is equivalent to affirming that he is the subject or person that sustains him.²⁶

Further on he writes:

The Beginning of all things, which is Jesus Christ, irradiates souls through the Holy Spirit, for it is impossible for the Lord Jesus to be contemplated except in the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says (1 Cor 12:3).²⁷

24 Cf., e.g., *CE I* 446–503 (GNO I, 156–172).

25 *CE I* 267 (GNO I, 104).

26 Cf. J. Ibáñez—F. Mendoza, “El valor del término *hypóstasis* en el libro 1 Contra Eunomio de Gregorio de Nisa,” in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El “Contra Eunomium 1” en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 329–333.

27 *CE I* 531 (GNO I, 182).

Here two divine characteristics of the Word are applied directly to Jesus Christ: He is the beginning of all things, and it is impossible that Christ be known except in light of the Holy Spirit.

As has been highlighted many times, in the controversy between Eunomius, Basil, and Gregory, when applying names to God, they show themselves to be very careful in their use of language.²⁸ The subject occupies a large section of *CE* II. In the aforementioned paragraph we see him use extensively that which later theology would call *communicatio idiomatum*, i.e., the attribution of divine and human attributes to the same subject. In this area Gregory likewise remains consistent with the core of his thought. He will thus express this marvelous exchange of properties in the *Antirrh* commenting on *Phil* 2:9, *God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name*:

His divine nature, however, cannot be expressed by a name but the two [the divine and human natures] became one through their co-mingling (διὰ τῆς ἀνακράσεως). For that reason God receives his name from his humanity. For *at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow* (cf. *Phil* 2:10), and a man becomes above every name (ἄνθρωπος ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα). This is a distinctive feature of the deity which cannot be expressed by means of a particular designation. The aim is that what is lofty came to be lowly, so what is lowly should put on lofty titles. As the deity is named through the man, so that which has been raised up to the deity from its lowly state, acquires a *name which is above every name*.²⁹

In the horizon of the theology of the name and the ineffability of God, this exegesis is an eloquent testimony of the realism and the depth with which Gregory

28 To this respect, *CE* II is of great interest for the extent and depth with which Gregory tackles the issue. B. Pottier dedicates a detailed study to this issue in *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse*, Namur 1994, 143–220. See also E. Cavalcanti, *Studi eunomiani*, Roma 1976, 34–46; T. Kobusch, “Zu den sprachphilosophischen Grundlagen in der Schrift *Contra Eunomium* des Gregor von Nyssa,” *vid. supra*, 295–318; G.C. Stead, “Logic and the Application of Names to God,” *vid. supra*, 341–356; J. Zachhuber, “Cristological Titles—Conceptually Applied? (*CE* II 294–358),” in: L. Karfiková—S. Douglass—J. Zachhuber (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Translation with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomouc, September 15–18, 2004)*, Leiden 2007, 257–278; R. Winling, “Introduction,” in: *Grégoire de Nysse. Contre Eunome I*, 1–146, SC 521, Paris 2008, 76–78 and 84–88; L.F. Mateo-Seco, “Atributos y simplicidad divina en el *CE* II de Gregorio de Nisa,” in: T. Trigo (ed.), *Dar razón de la esperanza. Homenaje al Prof. Dr. José Luis Illanes*, Pamplona 2004, 381–400.

29 *Antirrh* 22 (GNO III/1, 161, 17–26; tr. A. Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, London 2003, 58).

understands the hypostatic union: an extraordinarily close union between the divine and the human in Christ. Through this union the humanity of Christ is elevated to the divine and receives the power to redeem man's body communicating to him his own resurrection.³⁰ The incarnation is an *abasement* of the divine to the human.

As J.-R. Bouchet³¹ has indicated, Gregory's Christological language—specifically the terms he uses to speak about the union of the divine and human elements in Christ—is imperfect if considered in light of the clarification that takes place in the Council of Chalcedon and the subsequent Christological disputes. *CE I* is still more than fifty years from Chalcedon, and sometimes Gregory refers to the union as a 'mixture' (μίξις) of the divine and the human. This is not the case in the following text. The expression that Gregory uses truly articulates the force with which he understands the union: because of this union, Christ is "a man above every name" (ἄνθρωπος ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα). This same Christology is present throughout *CE*, including the first book, which is undoubtedly focused on other issues.

Although Gregory's Christological language may be imperfect when speaking about the union of the human and the divine in Christ, it is not careless. Gregory places great importance on the philosophical of language. Nor is he careless in *CE I* when attributing divine and human names to Christ. This attribution is well thought out, and is thus a good illustration of his Christological thought.

There is an eloquent example of the application of names to Christ in the paragraph in which he introduces his exposition of the equality of honor that is due to the Father and the Son:

If our mind were to go to kingly power and worth, the Son is a king. If we think of a judge, all judgment is the Son's. If our soul dwells on the magnificence of creation, *all things came to be through him* (*John* 1:3). If we

30 Cf. *Or Cat* 37 (SC 453, 314–324). Cf. R. Winling, "La résurrection du Christ comme principe explicatif et comme élément structurant dans le Discours catéchétique de Grégoire de Nysse," *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989) 74–80.

31 J.-R. Bouchet, "A propos d'une image christologique de Grégoire de Nysse," *RThom* 67 (1967) 49–65; Id., "Vocabulaire de l'union chez Grégoire de Nysse," *RThom* 68 (1968) 533–582; R. Winling, *La Résurrection et l'Exaltation du Christ*, Paris 2000, 35–83; Id., "Introduction," in: *Grégoire de Nysse. Discours Catéchétique*, SC 453, Paris 2000, 17–130; J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa, Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, Leiden 2000; L.F. Mateo-Seco, "Cristology," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 133–152.

contemplate the cause of our life, we know the true Life which descended to our nature. Even if we enquire about translation out of darkness, we are not ignorant of the true Light, by whom we were made foreigners to darkness. And if anyone thinks wisdom is to be honoured, *Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God* (1 Cor 1:24).³²

Gregory's Christology is structured around two hymns that consider the Christology 'from above' and are very dear to the Alexandrian school: *John* 1:1–18 and *Phil* 2:5–11. In this Christology, the predominating element is the unity of the subject in Christ: it is the Word that is made man, that assumes human nature and communicates to it his attributes, making humanity partaker of his dignity. This same Christology is present in *CE* I.³³

The Salvation of Man

Christology and theological anthropology also supply Gregory with definitive reasons to reject the Trinitarian thought of Eunomius whose exposition he considers completely unfeasible. Man can only be saved by the one who has not received his being through transformation, that is, who is the absolute good and has always existed.

If this idea were to prevail, that the Lord is not perfect in every good, it is not difficult to see where the blasphemy ends up. Truly the faith of such persons is vain, empty their preaching, insubstantial their hopes, whose substance comes with faith. Why are they baptized into Christ, who has no power of goodness of his own? Far be it from me to utter such blasphemy. And why do they believe in the Holy Spirit, if they think the same things about him? How can they after their mortal birth be born again by baptism, when on their view even the power that gives them rebirth does not possess indefectibility and self-sufficiency? How is the body of

³² *CE* I 335 (GNO I, 126).

³³ The way in which Gregory applies the titles and names from Scripture to Christ is particularly evident in *Perf*. It is built on the explanation of the meaning of the name of Christ to such an extent that it could be considered a treatise on the names of Christ. J. Daniélou situates *Perf* in the last years of Gregory's life; G. May places it in 370–378 (cf. P. Maraval, "Chronology of Works," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 160). In either case, these are issues about which Gregory's thought did not vary.

their humiliation transformed (*Phil* 3:21), when they think that the one who transforms is himself in need of change for the better, wanting yet another to transform even him?³⁴

For Gregory, the messiahship of Christ is far superior to the messianic expectations of the Jews. They were awaiting the liberation of Israel and a final justice. The Christians believe that Christ frees man from death, definitively transforming him by means of a new birth in baptism, and filling him with all kinds of goods, including the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. This requires not only that Christ have the creative power capable of transforming the body from death into eternal life, but that he be God.³⁵

Eunomius also accepts that the Word has creative power, although he himself is created. Maybe for this reason, Gregory takes his argument one step further. It is necessary that the Lord “be perfect in every good” so that he can bring about the salvation of man, given that this includes not only the resurrection of the body, but also the intimate and eternal unity with the divinity. Here we find one of the most powerful reasons that compels Gregory to defend the perfect divinity of the Word. Gregory’s understanding of Eternal happiness, in which there is no place for tedium,³⁶ necessitates that the Word be perfectly divine.

This is confirmed in the continuation of the argument in which Gregory alludes to a topic of great importance in his eschatology and spiritual doctrine: the *epektasis*, whose presence in this place additionally manifests the Christocentrism with which Gregory conceives Christ’s mediation and man’s beatitude in heaven.³⁷ It is necessary that the Word be infinite like the Father, because

34 CE I 288–289 (GNO I, 111–112).

35 R. Winling offers a thought-provoking reading of *Or Cat* when he presents the resurrection of Christ as its organizing principle (cf. R. Winling, “La résurrection du Christ comme principe explicatif et comme élément structurant dans le Discours catéchétique de Grégoire de Nysse,” *Studia Patristica* 22 [1989] 74–80; see also, Id., “Or Cat,” in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 546–549; Id., “Introduction,” in *Grégoire de Nysse: Discours Catéchétique*, SC 453, Paris 2000, 87–93).

36 For further reading on this topic, the following study is useful: M. Harl, “Recherches sur l’origénisme d’Origène: la satiété (κόρος) de la contemplation comme motif de la chute des âmes,” *Studia Patristica* 8 (1966) 373–405.

37 J. Daniélou dedicated some pages to the topic of the progression toward the infinite in the contemplation of God, calling it *epektasis*. Since then the studies of this topic have multiplied. Cf. J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, Paris 1944, 291–307; Id., “Mystique de la ténèbre chez Grégoire de Nysse,” *DSP* 11 1882–1885.

only in this way can he attract the heart of every man in a *crescendo* without end and without fatigue. Here he presents the topic:

Since the First Good is infinite by nature, the participation of the one which enjoys it must also perforce be infinite, ever apprehending more, and always discovering what exceeds the apprehended, and never able to draw level with it, since neither can what is shared be fathomed, nor can what grows by participation desist.³⁸

The infinity of the good is one of the key issues in the rejection of Eunomius' position. This infinity can only occur in God because only He possesses the good, not by participation, but is the Good in itself. This divine infinity is reflected in man created in his image in his infinite capacity to progress in his encounter with God. However, absolute infinity can only be possessed by one who has not passed from non-existence into being, i.e., one who has not been created. The generation of the Word, then, cannot entail the passing from non-being into being. The affirmation of the Anomeans and Eunomius that there was a time in which the Word did not exist could not have seemed anything less than blasphemous to Gregory.

Claudio Moreschini notes that Gregory is inspired in the neo-Platonic tradition, specifically in Plotinus, when speaking about the infinite and the universal attraction of the Good.³⁹ The good attracts everything toward itself, and, at the same time, everything tends toward the good. Gregory imagines the whole of creation in tension toward God, and he imagines man, created in the image and likeness of God, with an infinite capacity for growth in this tension. The divinity of Christ, then, is key to Gregory's entire system of thought.

38 CE I 291 (GNO I, 112). R. Winling notes that this paragraph is of great interest: Gregory juxtaposes the growth, as reflected in the *epektasis*, with the immutability inherent in the full possession by nature: "En quelques lignes d'une rare densité, he concludes, Grégoire définit ce qu'il nomme ailleurs 'épectase', cette aspiration au mieux résultant d'une attirance innée. Aussi longtemps que l'élan ne retombe pas par choix allant dans l'autre sens, il y a progrès vers une perfection plus grande et accroissement par participation aux perfections divines. Mais justement, il y a participation parce qu'il s'agit de créatures. Donc pour le Fils et l'Esprit, on ne saurait parler de tension vers le mieux" (R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse. Contre Eunome I*, 147–691, SC 524, Paris 2010, 102–103, nt. 3 and 4).

39 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneades* VI, 9, 8–9; cf. C. Moreschini, *Gregorio di Nissa: Teologia Trinitaria*, Milano 1994, 159, nt. 182.; 160, nt. 201.

Through Christ and in Christ

This conviction is inseparable from another of Gregory's fundamental convictions: man's salvation and divinization are realized not only 'because of Christ', but 'in Him and through Him'. Gregory has always asserted this conviction, but when he is writing *CE*, this conviction is abundantly present in his works from the same period. His sacramental theology, his conception of the resurrection, and even his understanding of the reason for the incarnation are many other manifestations of the centrality of Christ in his thought.⁴⁰

It is not only then the defense of Basil, nor is it a bid in favor of Nicaea that leads Gregory to combat the Anomeans and to make every effort to defend *homoousios*. As all of the commentaries underscore, these things have a decisive influence; however, one of the most profound reasons behind Gregory's attitude toward Eunomius is found in the internal demands of his thought, in his need for coherence.

For Gregory, salvation is realized 'in' Christ. The topic is touched upon in one of his *ad hominem* arguments against Eunomius, specifically when criticizing the line of reasoning he has followed to conclude that the second substance emerges from the first substance. Eunomius, says Gregory, attempts to start from the first substance (οὐσία) in order to reflect upon the nature (φύσιν) of the Son, as if the substance of the Father were more accessible to human knowledge than the nature of the Son. Gregory further argues that Eunomius does not recognize that there is no access to the knowledge of the Father except through the Son, in accordance with the assertion: *No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him* (*Mt* 11:27).⁴¹

In *CE* 1, Gregory appeals to the titles of Christ found in Sacred Scripture that present him as 'revelatory' of the Father: Wisdom, radiance, glory of the Father, image of the invisible. He finds in the perfection of this manifestation yet another reason to defend the truth that Christ is of the same nature as the Father. Ultimately, it is a question of the infinite perfection of Christ as Image.⁴² He is light from light. Christ (Χριστός) is the *true light* (*John* 1:9) that has brought

40 Cf., e.g., *Or Cat* 33–40 (GNO III/4, 82–106). See also R. Winling, "Introduction," in: *Grégoire de Nysse. Discours Catéchétique*, SC 453, Paris 2000, 26–108.

41 Cf. *CE* 1 459–460 (GNO I, 159–160).

42 For Gregory, man has been created in the image of God and in the image of Christ, who is the perfect Image. On this topic, cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "Imágenes de la Imagen: Génesis 1,26 y Colosenses 1,15 en Gregorio de Nisa," *Scripta Theologica* 40 (2008) 677–694.

us from darkness into light. He is the *wisdom and power of God* (1 Cor 1:24).⁴³ He is also the *radiance of the eternal light*, that we conceive as eternal as the archetypal light (πρωτότυπον).⁴⁴ Gregory gives great importance to the passage *John* 10:30: *I am in the Father and the Father is in me*. Already at the end of *CE* I he considers this passage together with that of *Heb* 1:3: Christ is the radiance of the Father and the one is in the other as the image and the archetype are present in one another.

... as the Lord says, *I am in the Father and the Father in me* (*John* 10:38), each being said, of course, to be in the other from a different point of view: the Son in the Father, as the beauty of the copy is in the original shape, and the Father in the Son, as the beauty of the prototype is in the copy (...) *Being*, he says, *the effulgence of his glory* (*Heb* 1:3): 'being', not 'having become', so that both kinds of irreligious interpretation might thereby be excluded.⁴⁵

Christ, Glory of the Father

To call Christ 'effulgence' of the Father's beauty is the same as calling him 'glory' of the Father. Gregory uses the concept of 'glory' both for the Son and for the Holy Spirit. It is a subject that is very dear to him, and one that he refers to with relative frequency.⁴⁶ In *CE* I he uses it to argue in favor of the coeternity of the Father and Son: the Son is nothing other than the same glory of the Father, who always has with him his glory.⁴⁷ The Father has never been without his glory. Christ is thus the perfect way to the Father, because he is the same glory of the Father and he reveals him perfectly, i.e., he is the radiance in which He is made manifest. 'In Christ', then, the Father is perfectly known. It could not be so if he was not of the same nature, that is, if he was a creature, even the first and most excellent of all creatures.

43 Cf. *CE* I 336 (GNO I, 226).

44 Cf. *CE* I 338 (GNO I, 132–133).

45 *CE* I 636–637 (GNO I, 209).

46 Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "La unidad y la gloria (Jn 17, 21–23 en el pensamiento de Gregorio de Nisa)," in: J. Chapa (ed.), *Signum et testimonium*, Pamplona 2003, 179–201; cf. M. Brugarolas, "The Holy Spirit as the glory of Christ: Gregory of Nyssa on John 17:22," in: N. Dumitrascu (ed.), *The Ecumenical Legacy of the Cappadocians*, London 2015, 247–263.

47 Cf. *CE* I 385 (GNO I, 139).

In *CE I* the transcendence of God over all created things is strongly emphasized, as is his simplicity and infinity. Hence Gregory's confidence in the argument that, if Christ is 'radiance' and 'image' of the Father, he would not really be so unless, like the Father, he transcended all created nature.⁴⁸

Basil had used as his main argument in the defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit the fact that he is the sanctifier and makes Christ known,⁴⁹ arguing that the Spirit can only make known the Son if he is of the same nature. Gregory follows this same line of reasoning when speaking about the divinity of Christ: only by way of the Son, who is known in the Spirit, is it possible to access the Father. This access to the Father is perfect, given that both the Son and the Spirit are with the Father one divinity, one origin.

The Beginning of all things, which is Jesus Christ, irradiates souls through the Holy Spirit, for it is impossible for the Lord Jesus to be contemplated except in the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says (1 *Cor* 12:4); and through the Lord, who is the Beginning of all things, the Beginning which transcends all beginning is discovered to us, that is the God over all, for neither is it possible to come to know the ultimate good, except as it appears in the Image of the Invisible.⁵⁰

The paragraph takes us into the rich theology found in Gregory's short Trinitarian treatises. There is nothing that would suggest an abstract concept of the divinity. Throughout *CE I*, Gregory insists, against Eunomius, that in order to speak about the Trinity one must use the names revealed by Our Lord—Father, Son, and Spirit—instead of the substance terms. The intimacy of God is seen as a marvelous "symphony of equals,"⁵¹ in such a way that the knowledge of one connotes knowledge of the other: the Son is known in the Spirit and the Father is contemplated in the Son. To place the Son and the Spirit among the created beings would, in the logic of Gregory, render impossible the most essential part of Christ's work, which is to draw all of creation to the Father.

48 Cf. *CE I* 333–338 (GNO I, 125–127).

49 Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 9 (SC 17 bis, 145–148). In *De Spiritu Sancto* we find the same dynamism within the Trinity, both descendent (from the Father, through the Son, to the Holy Spirit) and ascendant: the Spirit makes known the Son, and the Son the Father (cf. R. Winling, *Grégoire de Nysse. Contre Eunome I*, 147–691, Paris 2010, SC 524, 259, nt. 3). This same dynamism is present in Irenaeus, *Epideixis*, 6 (SC 406, 90–92).

50 *CE I* 531 (GNO I, 180).

51 "... ἐν τῇ τῶν ὁμοίων συμφωνίᾳ τῆς θεότητος ..." (*CE I* 531 [GNO I, 180]).

The 'Subjection' to the Father

Eunomius argues against the Trinitarian equality appealing to 1 Cor 15:28: *Then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all*. The subjection, argues Eunomius, implies substantial subordination of the Son to the Father and of the Spirit to the Son, who presents him to the Father together with all creation.

1 Cor 15:28 was widely used among the semi-Arians who interpreted the 'subjection' of the Son (ὑποταγή) in a subordinationist sense. Gregory treats this issue here without dedicating much space to it, but promises to treat it more extensively on another occasion, which he did.⁵² The exegesis done by Gregory in CE I demonstrates the path he will follow in the *In illud: Tunc et ipse*. Gregory places 1 Cor 15:28 at the end of time; then Christ will offer everything to the Father, especially mankind, which will form with Him a close unity.⁵³ Gregory's exegesis relies, then, on the exercise of Christ's mediation.

The passage in the Apostle about the future subjection of all mankind to the Onlybegotten and through him to the Father, in which in his deep wisdom he says that the Mediator of God and men is himself subjected to the Father (1 Cor 15:28), hinting at the obedience of all mankind through the subjection to the Father of the Son who has shared in manhood, I shall for the present defer as requiring fuller and more detailed treatment.⁵⁴

The eschatological mediation of Christ and the reign of Christ coincide. According to Gregory, the mediation consists in that Christ uniting all things with himself—especially humanity—and, united to Himself, he directs them to the Father. The 'subjection' that Saint Paul speaks about would refer, then, to the eschatological future and would be applied to the Lord as Firstborn and King of all creation. The Only-begotten Son was made "partaker of our humanity;" and 'through Him and in Him' the obedience of all mankind is offered to the Father. The Son is mediator (μεσίτην) of our obedience through his own obedience to the Father. The work of mediation by which Christ manifests the Father to

52 He does so in a short treatise titled *In illud: Tunc et ipse* (GNO III/II, 21). J. Daniélou proposes 385 as the year of its redaction. Downing, based on the similarities between this treatise, CE I and *Ref Eun*, suggests that it was written in the same period as these other works.

53 Cf. H. Drobner, "Die biblische Argumentation Gregors von Nyssa in ersten Buch Contra Eunomium," *vid. supra*, 319–340.

54 CE I 193 (GNO I, 83).

mankind and by which he offers man's obedience to the Father is based on his communion with both humanity and divinity. Gregory emphasizes this point further on in *CE* I.⁵⁵

Gregory uses Christ's eschatological mediation as the key to interpreting 1 *Cor* 15:28. It is 'in Himself', being God and man, where Christ gives unity to the whole of creation and subjects it to the Father. The reason why Gregory is opposed to Eunomius in the year 380 is the same reason why he will later oppose Apollinaris of Laodicea in 383/387: Christ's perfect humanity and divinity and their extremely close union.

In between *CE* I and *Antirr*h is the treatise *In illud: Tunc et ipse*. In this treatise, Gregory brings together 1 *Cor* 15:28 with *John* 17:21–23, the prayer for unity, in a grandiose vision of God's eschatological presence in all things in and through Christ,⁵⁶ in his mediation. Here is a particularly expressive passage:

He who is in the Father and has lived among men fulfills his mediation by uniting everyone in himself and through him with the Father, as the Lord says in the Gospel when he addresses the words to the Father: *So that all my be one. As you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they be also one in us* (*John* 17:21). This clearly shows that in uniting us to himself, He who is in the Father, by means of himself accomplishes our union with the Father.⁵⁷

The 'subjection' of the Son to the Father is nothing other than the fact that God *will be all in all*, as it says in the very passage in 1 *Corinthians* 15.

55 "What truer witness could be found than the voice of the Lord, who throughout the Gospel calls his own true Father 'Father' and not 'Creator', and refers to himself not as 'work of God' but as 'Son of God'? Just as, in order to indicate his fleshly participation in the human, he used the title 'Son of Man' for the visible, showing the natural affinity of his flesh with that from which it was taken, so he points out by the title 'Son' his true and genuine relation to the God of the universe, using the word 'Son' to point to the natural intimacy" (*CE* I 297–298 [GNO I, 114]).

56 Cf. G. Maspero, "Tunc et ipse," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 766–767. See also, B. Casimir, "When (the Father) Will Subject All Things to (the Son), Then (the Son) Himself Will Be subjected to Him (the Father) Who Subjects All Things to Him (The Son).—A Treatise on First Corinthians, 15:28 by Saint Gregory of Nyssa," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 28 (1983) 1–15.

57 *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III/2, 21). Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, "La unidad y la gloria (Jn 17:21–23 en el pensamiento de Gregorio de Nisa)," in: J. Chapa (ed.), *Signum et testimonium*, Pamplona 2003, 193–195.

The Reign of Christ

In light of Gregory's reading of 1 *Cor* 15:28, the mediation and the reign of Christ are presented as closely related concepts. The central idea is this: the entire universe—and, in particular, mankind—tends towards God and finds him in Christ and through Christ. Once all is 'subjected' to Christ, He will offer to the Father this subjection, which is nothing other than the complete departure from evil.⁵⁸

Coming together in this same argument is the importance that Gregory confers to the figure of Christ as the new Adam, e.g. in his references to 1 *Cor* 15:20–28 in the *Tunc et ipse*. Also coming together in the argument is an exegesis of Phil 2:11 and the way in which he understands that at the end of time every knee will bend before Christ. This exegesis, very similar to that of Origen, highlights the agreements—and variations—with him in that which concerns the *apocatastasis*.⁵⁹ Christ presents our obedience to the Father in the measure that our obedience is 'subjection' to Christ and union with Him. In this perspective, one can appreciate the exact sense in which Gregory calls Christ Mediator (μεσίτην).

For all of these reasons, for Gregory it is of utmost importance to make clear the equality of Christ with the Father. His work of mediation necessitates it, precisely because of the radical nature with which it is conceived: it is 'in himself' where Christ realizes the unity. Add to this the universality of this mediation: all must be subjected. This subjection would be an unbearable tyranny if Christ was not God.

Gregory dedicates a lengthy and eloquent passage to this topic in *CE* I. It is absurd to say that the Only-begotten Son is not a true Son, but instead received his being through creation and later 'inherited' the whole of creation. If being a mere creature Christ received the whole of creation as an inheritance, how could creation accept him as Lord (Κύριος) without rebelling against itself, given that it would be subjected to the servitude of one who, by nature, is equal to itself?⁶⁰

In an initial reading, Gregory's argument might seem a mere rhetorical device that is easily refuted. Man also exercises dominion over creation and Gregory, recognizing man as a creature, does not consider this dominion a

58 Cf. *CE* I 193; GNO I, 83.

59 Cf. *Antirr*h 21 (GNO III/1, 161–162). Gregory's exegesis of 1 *Cor* 15:28 shows that he views the end of time in a way that is optimistic—'all' will be subjected to Christ—but definitive, and not as a new beginning. The 'subjection' of the whole of creation is forever.

60 Cf. *CE* I 524–527 (GNO I, 178).

tyranny. He offers an explanation in this same place: man is of a superior nature superior to the animals, and therefore rightly claims dominion over them. This reasoning could appear to favor Eunomius, who could respond that precisely because the Word is the first creature and from him proceed all the rest, the universal rule rightly belongs to Him.

Nevertheless, Gregory uses this reasoning as one who puts forward an irrefutable argument. To what does he owe such certainty? In my opinion, there are three fundamental reasons strongly intertwined in his thinking: 1) his conception of the dignity of man; 2) his conception of Christ's lordship; 3) the way in which he understands the Lord's mediation, i.e., the way in which he understands the 'subjection' of 1 Cor 15:28. Let us briefly examine these three questions.

a) *The dignity of man*. It is clear that Gregory receives from Greek thought a hierarchical conception of being. Creation appears to him like a marvelous symphony composed of diverse beings of varying dignity. Suffice it to recall what Cardinal Daniélou wrote on this subject:⁶¹ inferior beings exist in reason of superior beings. The spirit is superior to matter. Man, composed of matter and spirit, is a microcosm, i.e., a nexus between the spiritual world and the material.⁶² Thus, by nature, he is lord of the material creation.

The gradation established by Gregory between matter and spirit, however, is not absolute; it is broken right here, in man, to whom he attributes the function of microcosm. In effect, following the logic of his approach, Gregory would have to attribute to the angels a power over man analogous to that which man has with respect to those immediately below him: irrational animals. And yet, this is not the case; that power belongs only to God. Why this rupture in the gradation? It must be attributed to a theological concept very dear to Gregory: man was created in the image and likeness of God.

Here the entire earlier tradition has a powerful influence, and, with special force, Basil's argumentation in his homilies *In Hexaemeron*.⁶³ Wherein lies man's likeness with God? Gregory places it, among other things, in that man, in the likeness of God, is ἀδέσποτος, without master.⁶⁴ He is master of himself

61 Cf. J. Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970, 18–133.

62 Cf. *Or Cat* 5 (GNO III/4, 18; SC 453, 164–166).

63 Cf. Basil, *Hexaemeron* I 6–19 (SC 160, 178–216).

64 Cf. *Or Cat* 5 (GNO III/4, 20; SC 453, 168). As D. Balás has noted, in Gregory's writings, the topic of man as image of God is related to his conception of participation in the divine perfections. Cf. D.L. Balás, *Μετουσία Θεού, Man's participation in God's perfections according to saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966, 161.

through that which is his crowning glory: his freedom.⁶⁵ Even before God in paradise he enjoyed *παρρησία*, an attribute of free citizens, not of slaves.⁶⁶ Thus, in Gregory's thought, if any another created being had received authority over man, this authority would be nothing short of tyrannical.⁶⁷

b) *The nature of the lordship of Christ.* Gregory insistently applies the noun *κύριος* to Christ. *CE* I is no exception. It could not be any other way given its usage in the New Testament. Christ is the Lord. His lordship is situated on a level very different than that of earthly empires. He is the authentic and universal lord of all creation, as *Col* 1:18 highlights by calling him "the beginning" and "firstborn." This 'lordship'—that all is subjected to him—is the way in which he exercises his mediation in accordance with *1 Cor* 15:28. How far-reaching is this dominion? As Gregory is fond of recalling, citing a text that is particularly dear to him, it is to the point that *every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:11)*, that is, until He receives the adoration that is directed to God. This is a true *homologia* in which is confessed the divine lordship of Christ, worship in the strong sense of the word. Both things would be appalling to the noble human nature if the one who received such adoration and possessed such lordship was not 'God from God'.⁶⁸

c) *The mediation of Christ.* Gregory does not conceive this mediation as something transitory, nor is the encounter with Christ conceived as a step that man reaches and later surpasses in his eternal ascent toward God. It is 'in' the Son, *radiance and glory of the Father*, where man gains access to the knowledge of God. In this context, it is enlightening that Gregory refers to the subject of the *epektasis* as an argument to prove the divinity of Christ against Eunomius.⁶⁹ In order to accomplish his work of mediation, the Son must possess the fullness of Good in himself in such a way that He himself is not subject to the laws of change and indefinite progress for not possessing the fullness of all good.

65 Cf. J. Gaith, *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1953, 64 ff.

66 Cf. J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, Paris 1944, 103–115.

67 This is the basis for Gregory's condemnation of slavery. Cf. G. Maspero, "Slavery," in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—G. Maspero (eds.), *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, Leiden 2010, 683–685. See also, M. Bergadá, "La condamnation de l'esclavage Dans l'Homélie IV," in: S.G. Hall (ed.), *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, New York 1993, 185–196.

68 Cf. *Ref Eun* 199–200 (*GNO* II, 396–397).

69 Cf. *CE* I 288–289 (*GNO* I, 111–112).

Gregory thus concludes the argument of the necessary superiority of Christ over all created things:

But if anyone attends to healthy doctrine and believes that the Son is of the divine and pure nature, everything will manifestly harmonize with the orthodox teaching, that the Lord is the maker of all things, that he reigns over what exists, not promoted by arbitrary choice or by usurped power over his fellows, but by superiority of nature exercising authority over all.⁷⁰

And he finishes insisting on the perfect unity and equality among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: "... that there is one Godhead, one Beginning, one Authoring over all things."⁷¹

The Son and the Creation of the World

Gregory turns to the prologue of John's gospel in his controversy with Eunomius. Like the hymn in the Letter to the Philippians, this passage is especially dear to him. Both texts contain a global vision of the mystery of Christ, and in *John* 1:1–3 it is clear that not only is creation attributed to the Logos, but the Logos is called God. Eunomius, on the other hand, also cites this text, attributing creation to the Logos, but, in fact, as a mere instrument.⁷²

Gregory uses the word πάντα, meaning 'all' or 'everything', in order to deny that the Son is a creature. He argues that if all things were created by Him, He cannot be a creature, since then the universality of this statement would not be true.⁷³

For All things, he says, came to be through him, and without him came to be not one thing that has come to be in him (*John* 1:3; cf. *Col* 1:16). He would not have declared it so, if he had believed the Lord himself also to be one of the things that have come to be.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ CE I 530 (GNO I, 181).

⁷¹ CE I 531 (GNO I, 182).

⁷² Cf. R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The Extant Works*, Oxford 1987, 50–52.

⁷³ Cf. CE I 221–222 (GNO I, 91).

⁷⁴ CE I 302 (GNO I, 116).

And he enters further into the exegesis, offering a deeper reason that brings us once again to the consideration of the reign of Christ over the entire universe: how could creatures find stability in Christ if He was unstable?

For how do all things come to be through him, and the things that have come to be have their constitution in him, unless the maker were something quite other than the nature of made things, and produced not himself but the creation? If the creation is through him, and the Lord himself is not through himself, he is something quite other and not a creature.⁷⁵

Gregory is arguing from the difference that exists between the mutability inherent in the created being and the stability of the divine being. The Logos must be God. How could a creature remain in existence if his Lord and maker did not have a perfectly stable nature? A creature can only find their constitution (σύστασιν) in his maker if it is God, and therefore transcends all mutability.

Gregory does not stop with this argument; rather, he directs his attention to the concept of the divine nature, which admits no degrees. This theological vision, however, finds a notable development in a dense page of *Or Cat*, which has an evident Judeo-Christian flavor to its theology and resonates with the echo of Irenaeus' thought. It is chapter 32 of *Or Cat* that addresses the cosmic dimension of the cross. Here is a quotation that particularly illuminates the depth, in Gregory's mind, that the reign of Christ has over all creation as expression of his divinity:

It is the characteristic of the Godhead to pervade all things and to extend itself throughout the nature of existing things in every part. For nothing would remain in being, without remaining in Him who exists (...) This is the very thing we learn from of the Cross, the figure of which is divided into four parts, so that from the centre, where the whole converges, the projections are four in number, that he who was stretched upon it, at the time of the economy of his death, is he who binds together and unites the universe to himself and by Himself brings to one harmonious agreement the diverse natures of actual existences. (...) Since, then, the whole creation looks to Him and finds in Him its centre, and through Him acquires cohesion with itself, (...) it was right that not by the ear alone should we be guided to the full understanding of the Deity, but that sight [the sight of Christ in the Cross] also should be the teacher of sublime thoughts.⁷⁶

75 CE I 302–303 (GNO I, 116).

76 *Or Cat* 32 (GNO III/4, 79–81; SC 453, 286–292). An identical use of the typology of the

The parallel between the quote above and chapter 34 of *Epideixis* is evident.⁷⁷ At the hour of his death, Christ, as man, is extended on the cross; as God, he is extended toward the whole of creation, giving consistency and unity to everything. The cross demonstrates this universal presence of the Logos; and, by reason of the dignity of Him who is outstretched upon it, he draws all things to himself (*John* 12:32), because he who is outstretched upon it “binds to himself the entire universe and harmonizes it”.

Clearly, Eunomius’s refusal to recognize Christ as God rendered impossible the vision that Gregory has of Christ’s universal reign and of the meaning of his-tory. And the bishop of Nyssa could do nothing less than react with full vigor, appealing to, among others, the argument that the nature of Christ’s reign over all creation necessitates the acceptance of the equality of his nature with the Father, his perfect divinity.

Conclusion

From the point of view of the ideas, the Eunomian controversy is situated among the Trinitarian controversies, given that the main issue being debated is the equality of Persons in God. Undoubtedly this also affects—given Christ’s unity—Christological and soteriological issues. Gregory, following Basil, reacts strongly against Eunomius. He is driven by his veneration and love for his brother, who Eunomius, following the controversial customs of the time, had mistreated. He is moved by the defense of the faith of Nicaea and the conviction that, with the Eunomian position, the mystery of the Trinity will be converted into something absurd by admitting gradation in God, who is infinitely perfect and simple. He is further moved by the conviction that the Eunomian approach is diametrically opposed to his entire Christology and mystical doctrine.

It is this last point that I have tried to underscore in my work. I thought it interesting to note, given that throughout *CE* I, the references Gregory makes to the Christological and soteriological issues are discreet and scarce. I think, however, that, despite being discreet, these references are important. And they are worth noting, already in *CE* I, with the goal of presenting the controversy within the breadth of topics in which Gregory situates it.

cross is found in *CE* III 39–40 (GNO II, 121–122). In both cases, even the same Scripture quotations are repeated.

77 Cf. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Epideixis* 34 (SC 406, 130–132). A similar typology is present in Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* 25 (SC 199, 354–358) and in Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum* IV, 26 (SC 377, 208–222).

This also demonstrates that there is not one, but many reasons underlying the tenacity maintained by Gregory in the controversy with Eunomius. For Gregory, these reasons are fundamental, because he believes that what is at stake is the radical novelty of Christianity as opposed to Judaism, the mediation and the reign of Christ, and Christ as radiance that manifests the glory of the Father. It is also the entire mystical theology of Gregory that reacts against Eunomius: only if Christ is God is he deserving of that mystical love that converts the soul into spouse of the Word, and that leads one out of himself in a *sobria ebrietas*, in a tireless search without growing tired.

Gregory has described with great beauty this spiritual movement in the *Life of Moses*, in his *Homilies on the Beatitudes* and in his *Homilies on the Song of Songs*. These pages, full of devotion, might help to better understand the controversial, and sometimes bitter pages of *CE* I, and certainly will help to understand that they were not issues without relevance to the Christian life.

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Fragments of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* in Syriac Translation*

Martien F.G. Parmentier

Only small portions of the Syriac version of *Contra Eunomium* have been preserved. Yet it seems not impossible that more than one translation in Syriac once existed (see *Some Observations* below). For reasons of space, we can only reproduce the surviving fragments of Book I here, followed by a checklist of those of the other books. Practically all fragments were found in manuscripts of the British Museum, at the indication of Wright's catalogue, which describes a large part of this collection. There must certainly be more and different fragments in the manuscripts of the British Museum and in those of other collections.

The numerous fragments of *Contra Eunomium* in the work of Peter of Callinicum *Against Damian*, including a portion of the lacuna in Jaeger's GNO I p. 154, constitute a special case. They will be identified in the forthcoming edition of this work by Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham.¹ One example of these quotations can be found in Fragment II, below.

We ourselves plan to publish elsewhere the remains of an anonymous commentary on *Contra Eunomium* III in BM Add. 17196, as well as fragments of other works by Gregory of Nyssa.²

The manuscripts, which have been used to gather fragments of *Contra Eunomium* Book I, are: BM Add. 12155 (8th century), 14532 (8th century), 14533 (8th or 9th century), 14538 (10th century) and 17194 (dated A.D. 886).

* Editor's note: For the original version of this paper, see M.F.G. Parmentier, "Fragments of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* in Syriac Translation", in: L.F. Mateo-Seco—J.L. Bastero (eds.), *El "Contra Eunomium" I en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa. VI Coloquio Internacional sobre Gregorio de Nisa*, Pamplona 1988, 421–430. We owe the transcript of the Syriac texts to J.L. Caballero.

1 Editor's note: The edition of Peter of Callinicum's *Contra Damianum* was completed in 2003: R.Y. Ebied, A. van Roey, L.R. Wickham, *Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni Tractatus contra Damianum, I: Quae supersunt Libri Secundi*, CChr.SG 29, Leuven 1994; *II: Libri Tertii Capita I–XIX*, CChr.SG 32, Leuven 1996; *III: Libri Tertii Capita XX–XXXIV*, CChr.SG 35, Leuven 1998; *IV: Libri Tertii Capita XXXV–I et addendum Libro Secundo*, CChr.SG 54, Leuven 2003.

2 Editor's note: From the author, see M.F.G. Parmentier, "Syriac Translations of Gregory of Nyssa", *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 20 (1989) 143–193; M.F.G. Parmentier, "A Syriac Com-

[illegible]

Fragment II

Eun I 251 (GNO I, 100,6–15): “εἰ δὲ ταῦτα ... λόγον περιληφθήσεται”.

Words preceding the quotation: “And that this is completely absurd you must hear from the wise Gregory of Nyssa, who in the 20th chapter of the homily of contradiction regarding Eunomius, of which the beginning is ‘As it seems, the wish that to everyone one should be of assistance, was not ...’ speaks in this way.” BM Add. 14533, 157^{vb}.

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Fragment III

Eun I 377 (GNO I, 137,27–138,5): “εἰ οὖν ... οὐσίᾳς εἶναι;”

Title: "Of Gregory of Nyssa from the third [sic!] homily against Eunomius". BM Add. 12155, 27^{ra}; 14532, 115^{vb}–116^{ra}; 14533, 81^{vb}–82^{ra}; 14538, 127^r.

Fragment v

Eun I 483–484 (GNO I, 166,18–20): “δύο φησὶν ἡμᾶς ... ὁμολογεῖν τὴν οὐσίαν;”.

The same.

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Fragment VI

Eun I 498 (GNO I, 170,13–14): “Πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ... φύσεως ἐδιδάχθημεν”.

Title: “That the Father and the Son are called two subjects, of Saint Gregory of Nyssa from the third [sic!] homily against Eunomius”. BM Add. 12155, 27^{ra}–27^{rb}; 14532, 115^{ra}; 14533, 82^{ra}; 14538, 127^r.

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Fragment VII

Eun I 503 (GNO I, 171,24–172,5): “Ἀκούσαντες ... τῶν Μανιχαίων τὸ δόγμα”.

Of Greg. of Nyssa from the first hom. against Eunomius. BM Add. 17194, 77^v.

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8 Read: ܐܬܝܬܐ or ܐܬܝܬܐ. Greek: ἐπαιδεύθημεν.

כִּי־יִשְׁכַּח־הוּא־אֶת־הַמִּצְוָה־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה־הוּא־לֵאמֹר
לֹא־יִשְׁכַּח־הוּא־אֶת־הַמִּצְוָה־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה־הוּא־לֵאמֹר

Fragment x

Eun I 514 (GNO I, 175,3–8): “ἀνάγκη πάντα ... τῇ ἀγεννήτῳ φύσει”.

The same.

[illegible]

Fragment XI

Eun I 515 (GNO I, 175,8–13): “εἰ γὰρ τὰ αὐτὰ ... χαρακτηρίζεται”.

Of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, from chapter 35 of the homily of contradiction regarding Eunomius, of which the beginning (is): 'As it seems, the wish that to everyone one should be of assistance, was not ...' BM Add. 12155, 29^{va}.

[illegible]

Fragment XII

Eun I 547–548 (GNO I, 184,17–185,2): “τοῦτο τοίνυν ... κλήσεως ἐπανιούσης”.

Of Saint Gregory bishop of Nyssa from the homily of contradiction regarding Eunomius, of which the beginning is: ‘It was not, as it seems, desirable that to everyone one should be of assistance ...’ BM Add. 12155, 10^r.

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Some Observations

A *Different Translations?*

The fragments printed above do not seem to originate from the same source. Three different incipits (= Jaeger vol. I p. 22, line 5) are quoted. The first one, in fragments II, VIII and XI, is the one used by Peter of Callinicum (since fragment II is quoted in his work *Against Damian*). The second one, in fragment IV, only differs in word order. The third one, in fragment XII, gives a different translation, and although the title of the book is the same as in fragments nr. II, IV, VIII and XI, the fragment's heading differs in that it mentions Gregory's episcopal dignity and omits the chapter number.

11 Read: ܠܠܝܢܝܐ (ܠܠܝܢܝܐ). Greek: κυρίας.

It is curious to find two fragments (nr. III and VI) which have allegedly been taken from Book III. Do they originate from the same source?

B *Titles of the Work*

Fragments I, III, VI and VII call the work "The (first or third) homily against Eunomius". Fragments II, IV, VIII, XI and XII call it "The homily of contradiction [the latter word stands for two Syriac words which doubtlessly translate ἀντιρρητικὸς λόγος] regarding Eunomius". On the problem of the title, see Jaeger, vol. I p. 22, apparatus.

C *Chapter Division*

Chapter numbers are indicated at fragments nr. I, II, IV, VIII and XI. They all coincide with Hall's division of the chapters.

A Checklist of Fragments of Syriac Translations of Further Sections of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*

So far, no fragment of *Contra Eunomium* Book II has turned up. There are however a number of fragments from Book III and from the *Refutatio*. They are listed below.

Eun III/1 29–31 (GNO II, 14,3–25): "ὅτι γὰρ οὐδὲν ... κτίσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου"; BM Add. 12168, 114^{vb}–115^{rb}.

Eun III/1 55–56 (GNO II, 23,9–18): "πρότερον οὖν γέγονε ... ὀνομάζει ἡ θεία γραφή"; the same.

Eun III/1 68 (GNO II, 28,6–8): "φιλοπονώτερον ... τῆς γεννηθείσης οὐσίας τὸ ὄνομα"; BM Add. 12155, 15^{va}; 14532, 101^{rb}–101^{va}; 14533, 75^{vb}; 14538, 122^r.

Eun III/1 70 (GNO II, 29,8–12): "οὕτω καὶ ἐνταῦθα ... ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπόστασις"; the same.

Eun III/1 74–75 (GNO II, 30,13–20): "τούτων οὐδὲ ὁ λόγος ... ἀπ' ἀλλήλων διάκρισιν"; BM Add. 12155, 28^{vb}–29^{ra}.

Eun III/1 74–75 (GNO II, 30,14–2–20): "ἐπεὶ οὖν ... ἀπ' ἀλλήλων διάκρισιν"; BM Add. 12155, 26^{va}; 14532, 113^{vb}–114^{ra}; 14533, 81^{ra} and (different translation) 14538, 126^v.

Eun III/1 87–88 (GNO II, 33,25–34,8): "ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό φημι ... κατανοήσωμεν δύναμιν"; BM Add. 12155, 17^{vb}; 14533, 83^{rb} and (one line different) 12155, 12^{ra}.

Eun III/1 94–95 (GNO II, 36,1–13): "Εἰ οὖν αἱ προσηγοραὶ ... τὴν κλήσιν"; BM Add. 12155, 12^{ra} (following on the last fragment) = (partly) Add. 12155, 23^{vb}; 14532, 106^{rb}; 14533, 77^{vb}–78^{ra}.

Eun III/2 47 (GNO II, 67,21–25): "Ὅταν πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ ... ταύτη κεχρήμεθα"; BM Add. 12155, 81^{rb}; 14532, 80^{va}–80^{vb}; 14538, 115^v.

- Eun* III/2 53–54 (GNO II, 70, 5–13): “εἷς γὰρ καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ... σαρκὸς τε καὶ αἵματος”; BM Add. 12155, 33^{vb}; 14532, 10^{vb}; 14538, 87^v.
- Eun* III/2 45–55 (GNO II, 67,4–70,21): “Τετράκις εἴρηται ... ἀδελφούς οὐκ ἔχει”; Selections in BM Add 12154, 65^v–66^r.
- Eun* III/2 97–99 (GNO II, 84,22–85,5): “ταῦτα πρῶτον ... ταῖς διανοίαις προσάγεσθαι”; BM Add. 12155, 61^{rb}; 14532, 134^{rb}–134^{va}; 14533, 37^{rb}; 14538, 133^v.
- Eun* III/2 131–134 (GNO II, 95,2–96,11): “τοιούτον τι μηχανᾶται ... καὶ τὸ θηρίον”; BM Add. 12155, 12^{ra}–12^{va}.
- Eun* III/2 147 (GNO II, 100,5–14): “ἀλλὰ μὴν ... διὰ τῆς μορφῆς ἐνεδείξατο”; BM Add. 12155, 50^{va} and (different translation) 17194, 78^v–79^r.
- Eun* III/3 9–10 (GNO II, 110,13–15): “Εγὼ εἰμι πρῶτος ... καὶ μετ’ ἐμέ οὐκ ἔσται”; BM Add. 12155, 107^{ra}.
- Eun* III/3 11 (GNO II, 110,26–111,11): “ἐπεὶ οὖν θεοῦ ἢ φωνῇ ... θεὸς οὐκ ἔστι”; BM Add. 12155, 107^{ra}.
- Eun* III/3 49–50 (GNO II, 125,14–21): “ἀλλὰ περιττὸν οἶμαι ... κατηγορία καθίσταται”; BM Add. 12155, 152^{vb}; cf. A. van Roey, *Peter of Callinicum, Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, Louvain 1981, p. 72.
- Eun* III/3 67 (GNO II, 132,3–7): “οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἀληθινῆς ζωῆς ... ἐπὶ τὸ ἄφθαρτον”; BM Add. 12155, 73^{ra}–73^{rb}; 14532, 58^{vb}; 14533, 64^{va}; also Mingana 69, 37^{vb}.
- Eun* III/4 9 (GNO II, 136,22–24): “ἐνεργεῖ γὰρ ... τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τὴν ἐνεργειαν”; BM Add. 14535, 8^v.
- Eun* III/4 29 (GNO II, 145,1–9): “τοῦ μὲν οὖν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ... πέφυκε”; BM Add. 12155, 68^{rb}; 14532, 48^{ra}; 14533, 59^{ra}; 14538, 105^r; also Mingana 69, 27^{vb}–28^{ra}.
- Eun* III/4 43 (GNO II, 150,21–24): “ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἐν σαρκὶ ... δι’ ἀνακράσεως”; BM Add. 12155, 75^{va}; 14532, 65^{rb}; 14533, 67^{ra}; 14538, 110^r; also Mingana 69, 43^{rb}.
- Eun* III/5 17 (GNO II, 166,2–10): “εἰ πνεῦμα λέγεται ... σαφῶς ἀποδέδεικται”; BM Add. 12155, 7^{vb}–8^{ra}.
- Eun* III/5 18 (GNO II, 166,19–24): “εἰ γὰρ πνεῦμα ... διενεχθήσεται”; the same.
- Eun* III/5 41–43 (GNO II, 175,10–27): “τίνες οὖν ... ἀγεννήτου ἐπωνυμίαν”; the same.
- Eun* III/5 44–47 (GNO II, 176,16–177,23): “εἰ δὲ ἐν τῷ γεννητῷ ... κατεργάζεται”; BM Add. 12155, 11^{rb}–11^{va}.
- Eun* III/5 50–52 (GNO II, 178,13–179,9): “Ἀλλὰ Πέτρος, φησί ... δι’ ὧν ὀνομάζομεν”; BM Add. 12155, 10^{vb}.
- Eun* III/5 52–53 (GNO II, 179,9–21): “τὰ μὲν γὰρ πράγματα ... αἰτίας ὑφεστηκότα”; BM Add. 12155, 10^{va}–10^{vb}.
- Eun* III/5 56 (GNO II, 180,19–24): “εἰπόντες γὰρ ... τοῦ ἐπιθεωρουμένου τῷ ὄντι”; BM Add. 12155, 24^{va} & 26^{ra}; 14532, 108^{va} & 112^{vb}–113^{ra}; 14533, 78^{vb} & 80^{va}; 14538, 124^v & 126^r.
- Eun* III/5 58 (GNO II, 181,13–21): “ὥσπερ τοίνυν ... ὑποκειμένῳ καταλαμβάνοντες”; BM Add. 12155, 26^{ra}; 14532, 112^{vb}–113^{ra}; 14533, 80^{va}; 14538, 126^r.

Eun III/5 59–60 (GNO II, 182,2–7): “ὁ τοίνυν τοῦ ὄντος ... οὐκ ἀπολείπεται”; BM Add. 12155, 5^{rb}.

Eun III/7 56 (GNO II, 234,24–26): “παντὶ δῆλόν ἐστιν ... τῆς τοῦ φωτὸς κτίσεως”; BM Add. 12155, 59^{vb}; 14532, 46^{vb}; 14536, 5^r.

Eun III/8 22 (GNO II, 246,27–247,4): “ἀλλὰ μὴν τὸ Σαβέλλιον ... τὴν οἰκειότητα”; BM Add. 12155, 152^{vb}. Cf. A. van Roey, *Peter of Callinicum, Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, Louvain 1981, p. 72.

Eun III/8 25 (GNO II, 247,21–248,7): “(...) κατὰ τὸ ἴσον ... οὐσίαν συντίθεσθαι”; BM Add. 12155, 24^{vb}–25^{ra}; 14532, 109^{rb}–109^{va}; 14533, 79^{rab}; 14538, 124^v. This fragment is preceded by two unidentified quotations allegedly from the same book.

Eun III/8 30–31 (GNO II, 250,1–15): “ὃ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ γεννηθῆναι ... ἐμφιλοχωρεῖν θεωρίᾳ”; BM Add. 12155, 28^{rb}, followed by a piece of commentary.

Eun III/10 11 (GNO II, 293,16–23): “ὁ πάσαν τὴν λογικὴν κτίσιν ... ἀποφοιτήσασα”; BM Add. 12155, 100^{ra}.

Eun III/10 18 (GNO II, 296,4–25): “Ἐτι καὶ τοῦτο ... κατὰ τὸ ἀκόλουθον ἔξει”; BM Add. 12155, 10^{vb}–11^{rb}.

Eun III/10 46–48 (GNO II, 307,17–308,20): “φησὶ γὰρ ὅτι ... διανοίας μετέχων”; BM Add. 12155, 29^{ra}–29^{rb}.

Eun III/10 49 (GNO II, 309,1–2): “οὐκοῦν φανερώς ... ὁ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ λόγος”; the same.

Eun III/10 51–53 (GNO II, 309,23–310,25): “ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν τῶν ἡμετέρων ... διαστελλούσης”; BM Add. 12155, 10^{vb}–11^{rb}.

RefEun 5–6 (GNO II, 314,19–315,3): “πολλῶν γὰρ ὄντων ... ἀσυγχύτως ἐνούμενον”; BM Add. 12155, 14^{rb}; 14532, 98^{rb}–98^{va}; 14533, 74^{rb}–74^{va}; 14538, 121^r. Partly in 12155, 26^{va}; 14532, 114^{ra}–114^{rb}; 14538, 81^{rab}. One phrase in 12155, 29^{ra}.

RefEun 12 (GNO II, 317,17–25): “διὰ τοῦτο φαμεν ... καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου”; BM Add. 12155, 14^{rb}; 14532, 98^{rb}–98^{va}; 14533, 74^{rb}–74^{va}; 14538, 121^r.

RefEun 14–17 (GNO II, 318,3–319,15): “Τί οὖν σημαίνει ... καὶ ζωὴ καὶ ἀλήθεια”; BM Add. 12155, 5^{rb}–5^{va}. Partly in 12155, 17^{vb}; 14533, 83^{rb}–83^{va}; 12155, 27^{va}–27^{vb}.

RefEun 33–37 (GNO II, 325,6–327,4): “Οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν ... διαπλάσσομενον”; BM Add. 12155, 10^{rb}–10^{va}.

RefEun 54–55 (GNO II, 334,17–25): “οὐκ ἐν τῷ γεννᾶν ... δοκεῖ ὁ Εὐνόμιος”; BM Add. 12155, 29^{vb}–30^{ra}.

RefEun 56–57 (GNO II, 335,12–20): “οὐδὲ διὰ σαρκὸς ... ἀφθορίαν οὐκ ἔλυμνηατο”; the same.

RefEun 58–62 (GNO II, 336,2–337,14): “οὐκ ἐν τῷ γεννᾶν ... τοῦ υἱὸς γενέσθαι”; the same.

RefEun 62 (GNO II, 337,18–20): “εἰ γὰρ ὁ ἑωρακὼς ... ὅλος φαινόμενος”; the same.

RefEun 124–125 (GNO II, 365,7–25): “οἶδαμεν γὰρ ... ἔμφασις ὑποδείκνυσιν”; BM Add. 12155, 5^{rb}–5^{va}.

RefEun 144 (GNO II, 374,12–15): “ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ μεσίτης ... καὶ πνεύματι ἀγίῳ”; BM Add. 14532, 198^{vb}.

RefEun 173–175 (GNO II, 385,12–386,3): “καὶ εἰ χρὴ ... ἐπηκολούθησε θάνατος”; BM Add. 12155, 80^{rb}–80^{va}; 14532, 78^{rb}–78^{va}; 14533, 72^{vab}; 14538, 115^r; 17193, 46^r–46^v.

The last section also in 17194, 8^r.

Unidentified: BM Add. 12155, 24^{vb}–25^{ra} and parallels (see above at 247,21–248,7); also 130^{va} and 153^{rb–va}.

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